

# ROLLING STONE

ACME

No. 16 AUGUST 24, 1968

THIRTY-FIVE CENTS

## THE BAND



*Report from the Newport Festival*



LEE TANNER

*Janis Joplin at the Newport Folk Festival: A Report by Jon Landau—Page 16*

## 'FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS JUST CALL US THE BAND'

BY ALFRED G. ARONOWITZ

NEW YORK

Big Pink is one of those middle class ranch houses of the type that you would expect to find in development row in the heart of suburbia rather than on an isolated mountain-top high above the barn architecture of New York State's rustic Woodstock. When the band moved into Big Pink in the spring of 1967, the house looked as if it had been tenanted by little more than a housewife with a dustmop who only crossed its threshold once a week to clean it.

The band, of course, had spent its six previous years living in hotels, rooming houses, motels, and the front parlors of friends' apartments, and what the band brought to Big Pink was the dust of the road. With Cardiff still black underneath their fingernails and Stockholm still caked on their boots, with Paris still waiting to be brushed off their trousers and Copenhagen unwashed from their hair, with the grime of Dublin, Glasgow, Sydney and Singapore still pasted on their luggage, staining their laundry and embedded in their pores, the band had just returned from an around-the-world tour with

Bob Dylan when Dylan, injured in his motorcycle accident, summoned them to Woodstock to help him complete a television movie.

In Woodstock, a friend found Big Pink for them, at \$125 a month. Setting like the dust they brought, the band lounged for a while on Big Pink's overstuffed furniture and then, taking their boots off the coffee tables, lugged their equipment into Big Pink's cellar, improvising a home recording studio. Dylan, who lived only a few miles away, would come over each evening and they would play together, running through a repertory that ranged from ancient folk songs to music they composed on the spot. Occasionally, a friend or neighbor would drop in as an audience. The band began to grow mustaches and beards and wear hats. It was in Woodstock that people started referring to them as The Band.

The band's lack of a name may be puzzling to some. But as Robbie explains it; "You know, for one thing, there aren't many bands around Woodstock and our friends and neighbors just call us the band and that's the way we think of ourselves. And then, we just don't think a name

means anything. It's gotten out of hand—the name thing. We don't want to get into a fixed bag like that."

Once they had been known as the Hawks. For a while they thought of calling themselves the Crackers. Now that they've released an album of their own music, they still don't have a name. Inevitably, they're going to be identified as Bob Dylan's band, but not even Dylan calls them that. Although Dylan painted a picture for the cover of the album, wrote one of the songs on it, co-authored two more and endowed the remainder with the unmistakable influence of his presence, *Music From Big Pink* is the band's claim to its own identity.

"There is the music from Bob's house," says guitarist Jaime (Robbie) Robertson, "and there is the music from our house. *John Wesley Harding* comes from Bob's house. The two houses sure are different."

Robbie was born and raised in Toronto. "I was young, very very young when I got into music," he recalls. "My mother was musical and I used to listen to country music a lot. Then when I was about five, I can remem-

ber I had a thing for the big bands. I've been playing guitar for so long, I can't remember when I started but I guess I got into rock just like everybody else." Robbie left high school to play music in the Toronto area and had his own group for a while before he was sixteen.

At 24, Robertson could be considered the leader of the band, if the band bothered itself with such considerations. Once described by Dylan as "the only mathematical guitar genius I've ever run into who does not offend my intestinal nervousness with his rear guard sound." Robertson was only 15 when he was hired by Ronnie Hawkins, one of the early kings and legends of that spontaneous combination of country soul and city flash known as Rockabilly. By the time he was 18, Robertson himself had become a legend in his native Toronto, barnstorming thousands of miles across rural North America with Ronnie Hawkins and the Hawks. For a musician, the dust of the road gets into more than your pores. It gets into your hair, your nose, your eyes, your mouth, your voice and your music.

—Continued on Page 8



THE BAND  
was born in this big pink house.

Their music was composed there.  
Their album cover was painted there.

Get the Big Pink message.  
from THE BAND.

**MUSIC  
FROM  
BIG  
PINK.**



Capitol  
RECORDS



Glorious Genie

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## CORRESPONDENCE, LOVE LETTERS & ADVICE

### SIRS:

I write to ask a favor of your journalistic services. Please consider an in-depth analysis of the bay area ballroom scene. I have been managing a local band that has recorded. They have worked in New York (Electric Circus) where they received critical acclaim. A first album is near release. They have played in Vancouver's Retinal Circus. San Diego's Palace is booked for July 19-20 for the band. Three booking agencies are competing for an exclusive contract with the band.

All this progress has been made with no appearances at a local ballroom. I am not bragging, but complaining. What is the booking policy of the local ballrooms? I have secured promises on four occasions that a date would be contracted at one of the ballrooms. Four times these promises were broken. I was offered less than scale for third billing at the above named dance halls.

Being relatively new to the Bay Area, I may be mistaken in my impressions. However, I believe the primary purpose of the local ballrooms should be to present the best talent possible at a reasonable price. I believe the secondary purpose of the ballrooms should be to support and promote local talent. Isn't this second premise the reason for the success of the Fillmore and Avalon? Why have they both dropped it?

DAN CAREY  
 BERKELEY

### SIRS:

While looking at my nephew's reader *If I Were Going* — an Alice and Jerry book that most Americans have read I guess — I found this forgotten bit of Britanniana that Beatle fans many find relevant. From the chapter entitled "The Mystery Bus" in the "It Happened in England" section: "High noon in Hastings-on-the-Green! At the place where Blackberry Lane crosses the King's Highway,

all the boys and girls of the village were gathered together. Some of them were jumping up and down with excitement. Most of them were talking as fast as boys and girls can talk. And all of them were watching for the Mystery Bus.

"If you lived in England, you might know what a Mystery Bus is without asking. It is just an ordinary bus. It runs every so often in the summertime. You show your ticket to the driver, hop on, and away you go. But you never make a mistake and ask where you are going. Oh my, no! That would never do. Only the driver knows that, and he never tells. That's where the mystery comes in. And of course that's where the fun comes in, too."

PAUL CONNAH  
 ATLANTA

### SIRS:

With all due respects to Jann Wenner and "Rolling Stone," I think that the review of Cream's new album was ridiculous. Cream are excellent blues musicians, and they do have a great, unique sound, but should they stop there? Studio effects, added tastefully, are not necessarily "garbage," and they can add a great deal to a song. With the exception of "Those Were the Days," Cream has done an excellent job in blending the driving drum-bass-guitar sound with softer effects.

If Cream were to stagnate in their blues-rock bag, both they and the public would soon become disenchanted with their music. That would be a terrible waste of talent.

JON MAY  
 GLEN RIDGE, N. J.

### SIRS:

After digesting (ug) your disgusting and perverted review of "Wheels of Fire" we can remain silent no longer. Never has a critic been so utterly and completely wrong.

How can you possibly assert that Cream are not proficient song

writers and recorders? What about "Sunshine Of Your Love," "Swlabr," and "N.S.U." . . .

While not being technically perfect, the transition from verse to chorus in "Passing The Time" may possibly be one of the great moments in musical history.

We can't understand your comments on "layers of superfluous instrumental work." This album has to be one of the tightest around.

We have to agree that Bruce's harmonica work is not among the best in the business, but the live recording of "Trainime" is one of the better recorded live performances in quite some time.

Needless to say, your review was a farce. Jann Wenner, in the words of Mr. D., "You should be made to wear earphones."

DAVE ELGIN  
 DAN BROCKMAN  
 LOS ANGELES

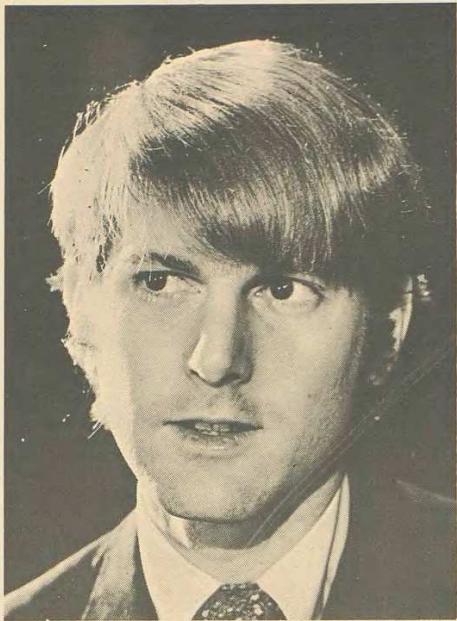
### SIRS:

Jack Elliott was cutting records long before the Vanguard thing which was mostly a serif on the capital letters of Folk Music as an American Fad, which was always after Tom Dooley. Elliot had a lot of stuff on Prestige which can be found in various record stores at giant D\*1\*S\*C\*O\*U\*N\*T prices in mono form, which are the same prices monophonic records used to be, until they are all gone.

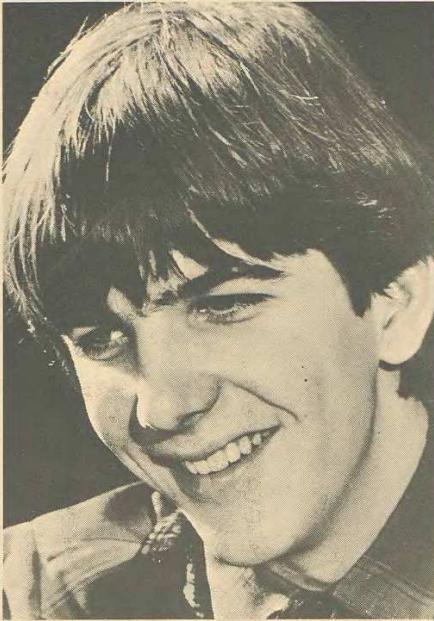
Elliott was singing around long before he got to Vanguard, and it isn't so much that one objects to patronizing singers-commentators who had the good fortune to share the same street with Dylan, as it is that one objects to misinformed singers-commentators spreading eagle grin of John come in your lately and embarrassed blot of a fact misspelled.

I don't call it anything.

E. C. KRUPP  
 SANTA MONICA



Roger (Jim) McGuinn



Gram Parsons

## RACE DISPUTE SPLITS BYRDS' NEST

### Gram Parsons Refuses Gigs in South Africa

The Byrds began a tour of South Africa in the end of July—minus Gram Parsons, the new Byrd who gave the new Byrds their country sound, but who refused to make the tour to the country of Apartheid and broke from the group instead.

Explained ex-Byrd Parsons, "I first heard about the South African tour two months ago. I knew right off when I heard about it that I didn't want to go. I stood firmly on my convictions." He told Melody Maker, the English pop paper, that this meant he had to leave the group if he refused to play to segregated audiences.

"The Byrds are a very professional group," Parsons said about the band which has had such hits as "Chimes of Freedom," and Pete Seeger's "Turn, Turn, Turn." "They thought it was unprofessional of me not to go to South Africa. I thought it was short-sighted, saying it was confirmed without finding out about the South African situation first. It was just two conflicting opinions," Parsons continued.

Gram Parsons will now lead his own group, one already formed. It is basically a "southern soul group playing country and gospel oriented music with a steel guitar."

Parsons said he knew very little about South Africa before the tour came up. "I knew there was an intense problem but I didn't know what it was based on. I began to talk to people who had been born there and I found out."

Parsons is familiar with racial problems, nonetheless. He was born in Waycross in the Okfinokee Swamp area of Georgia. He says he won't go back there except to see friends, most of whom are white.

Continued Gram: "I think the south in America is where you find the good, simple peo-

ple concerned with the elements, the rain, and in the mountain regions there are people who still speak in an Elizabethan accent and it's there that I extract some of my music."

Byrds Roger (Jim) McGuinn and Chris Hillman, the two re-

maining members of the group which began the "hip" rock and roll scene in America after the Beatles, had no comments to make about South Africa. They just went there to play with the approval of the Government.



## Tim Hardin Contracts Pleurisy

Tim Hardin has contracted pleurisy in England while on tour. Despite doctor's orders, he played the first show of his scheduled concerts on July 17 to a sell-out audience at the Royal Albert Hall in London which included the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and Donovan.

Now it appears that the widely-admired composer of "If I Were a Carpenter" and "Lady from Baltimore" is worse, and his condition is too serious to permit him to continue his scheduled tour. Pleurisy, a relatively uncommon disease these days, is inflammation of the pleura, the membranes that surround the lungs, and is a potentially serious condition, particularly in damp climates like the

British.

Hardin, whose unusual vocal style and influential songwriting have aroused much interest in Britain, among both artists and the pop and folk music audience, was unavailable for comment, but a statement was issued in which he expressed his regret at not being able to continue the tour as scheduled. Hope was expressed that, "health permitting," alternative dates would be set up for English audiences.

Tim Hardin was scheduled to appear on a series of radio and television shows, and in five live appearances in England, Scotland and Wales, in addition to the Royal Albert Hall appearance. All are now canceled indefinitely.

## Kaleidoscope Kollapses in Kash Krisis

BY JERRY HOPKINS

### LOS ANGELES

Most of the *eidos* (Greek for structure) went out of the Kaleidoscope this week as the New York backers of the Los Angeles night club fired their California managers.

In the turmoil that followed the dismissal of John Hartmann and Skip Taylor, Hartmann was jailed on a grand theft charge, concerts featuring Big Brother and the Holding Company were less than anticipated, and the "total environment" club found itself facing a dubious future. One rumor has it that Bill Graham may add Kaleidoscope to his dance empire.

Hartmann was arrested by Los Angeles police for obscenity during a confrontation with representatives of Wall Street broker Jay Lourie. The charge was changed to grand theft when it was learned these representatives had filed such a charge against Hartmann earlier in the day. Reasoning behind it was believed to lie in the fact that Hartmann had removed official books and documents from the Kaleidoscope premises. Hartmann, a former William Morris agent, said in a press conference that he had done this, hiding the papers in the Topanga Canyon section of the city.

It was determined that the Wall Street backers of the club—responsible, financially, for its opening in the old Moulin Rouge just four months ago—controlled 88 percent of the stock of Eidos, Ltd., a Kaleidoscope corporation. It was also learned that the club was losing money.

Hartmann said at the press conference, held poolside in his Hollywood Hills home, that initial agreements with the backers in January gave them two-thirds interest in the club in return for approximately \$100,000. Later, when it was agreed that more money was needed, the interest shared by Hartmann, Taylor and a third California partner, Gary Essert, was reduced to 12 percent. And, Hartmann said, negotiations were under way to bring in a fourth local partner, who promised additional money.

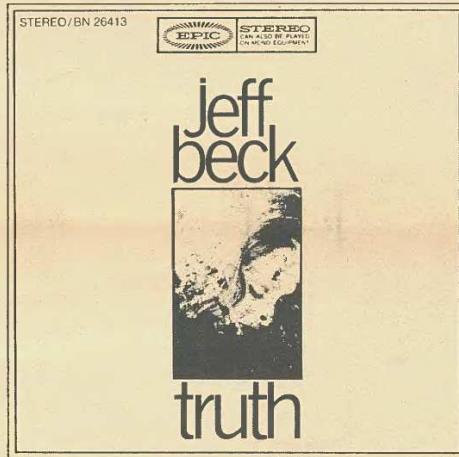
While the operation of the club—now being handled by the New York interests—moves into the courts, the club seems to be in aesthetic as well as financial trouble. The first night of a weekend gig for Big Brother was a dismal failure because when Hartmann was jailed, 95 percent of the employees walked out and in Hartmann's words, "sabotaged the club as they left." Very little in the club worked that night and even by Saturday night, the sound system was operating at only 50 percent of power and employees were being "drafted" from the street.

Hartmann and the "Kaleidoscope" are being represented by Francis R. Salazar of Denver, the attorney who successfully defended a pot bust in the Colorado City a few months ago by the Canned Heat, a group Hartmann manages with Taylor.

The Kaleidoscope is booked through August and the New York forces say them will honor all commitments made by the local managers and continue to keep the club open.

THE ALBUM IS OUT.

# Jeff beck



# truth



## Record Sales Over One Billion in 1967

More than \$1 billion worth of records were sold in the U. S. in 1967, according to John Wiley, director of market research for CBS/Columbia Group. The figure is 13% over the 1966 total of \$960 million, and was reached several years ahead of industry expectations.

In addition, the projected sales of LP's alone during 1968 will pass a billion. The long-playing, microgroove record, which was introduced just twenty years ago, now completely dominates the market. Single record sales amount to only one sixth of total record sales.

## David Ruffin Leaves Temptations

David Ruffin, former lead singer with the Temptations, has separated from the group and will pursue a solo career. Dennis Edwards, formerly of the Contours, replaced him starting with the Valley Forge Music Fair on July 9. Ruffin will continue to record for Motown and be managed by Motown's International Management Co.

Ruffin told SOUL Magazine when he'd been called before the executives of Motown and informed he was fired, "I didn't believe it." He said now he wanted

to "completely get out of the Temptations bag, drop the suits, ties and patent shoes and go into a deep soul bag—informal clothes and heavy R & B material."

Ruffin had been traveling separately from the rest of the Temptations for some time and had a personal manager apart from the group's manager. He had been speaking privately of ambitions to be in the movies, according to SOUL, and saying the group should be billed David Ruffin and the Temptations.

## Bluesbreakers Go Through Changes

John Mayall has broken up his seven-piece edition of the Blues-breakers and reduced the band to a quartet. The large band, which recorded Mayall's most recent album, Bare Wires, included Henry Lowther (trumpet), Dick Heckstall-Smith (tenor sax), Chris Mercer (tenor sax) and man.

Tony Reeves (bass guitar). Stephen Thompson, a seventeen-year-old bass player, will be in the new association, and the rest of Mayall's backup will consist of his current guitarist, Mick Taylor, and drummer, John Hise.

## Schoenbaum Joins Atlantic / Atco

Atlantic Records is setting up a Talent Development headed by Jerry Schoenbaum, the former manager of the Verve and Verve Forecast. Schoenbaum begins in his new post August 5.

During his tenure at Verve Schoenbaum, besides running the labels, was responsible for bringing to the company such artists as the Blues Project, Richie Havens, Janis Ian, Tim Hardin, the Velvet Underground, Harumi, Atlantic reflects the company's and the Paupers, among others, desire to keep up on this "underground" market.

part of an expansion program by that label, which is already heavily involved in rock music with such artists as Cream and the Iron Butterfly, and has also recorded rock-oriented jazzmen Steve Marcus and Charles Lloyd.

Schoenbaum has made his reputation in the recording industry for signing artists who have large album sales, but not on the basis of previous singles. His move to Velvet Underground, Harumi, Atlantic reflects the company's and the Paupers, among others, desire to keep up on this "underground" market.

## Yoko Ono's Endless Faces

John Lennon and his new woman, filmmaker Yoko Ono, are the stars of her latest movie. It is an hour and a half long look at their love. The plot is rather simple: John Lennon smiles and smiles and smiles for 90 minutes. The only digression is half way through when he breaks his beautiful silence to say, "Don't worry, love."

Miss Ono's earlier films have won some renown: the one previous to the current one was a movie-length close-up of 365-count 'em—naked human bottoms. The current movie is showing in London with a short titled "Two Virgins."

Miss Ono was quoted on the catch.

John Lennon and his new woman, filmmaker Yoko Ono, are the stars of her latest movie. It is an hour and a half long look at their love. The plot is rather simple: John Lennon smiles and smiles and smiles for 90 minutes. The only digression is half way through when he breaks his beautiful silence to say, "Don't worry, love."

"There wasn't any point in just making love secretly," Yoko explained, "We had to make a film together which had the same vibrations as making love. By being together, John and I are making good vibrations which we hope other people will catch."

## Percy Sledge Has Heart Attack

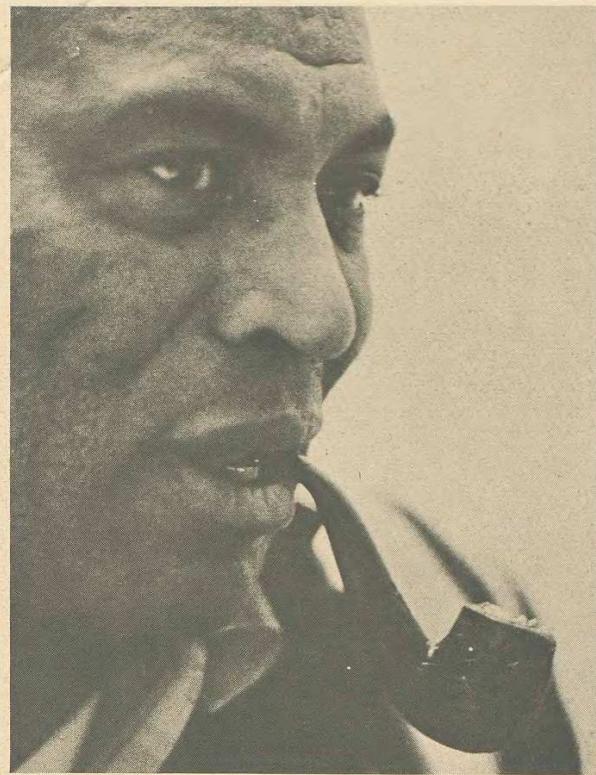
Percy Sledge suffered a heart attack recently in the middle of a performance. During a one-night show in Pensacola, Florida, the singer of "When a Man Loves a Woman" passed out on stage. The audience was largely unworried, thinking it part of the act, and the soul balladeer regained his feet in a few moments. He passed out again, however, as he walked off stage, after telling his manager he "felt fine."

This time a doctor was summoned. He ordered Sledge into a hospital in Pensacola, where his collapse was diagnosed as the result of a mild coronary thrombosis, or heart attack.

Sledge, who has had no pre-

vious record of heart trouble, was held in the hospital for eleven days and then released. He had been advised by his doctors to stay in bed for three or four weeks, but he became so worried about missing scheduled appearances that they concluded the hospital was doing him more harm than the stage would. He left to join the Joe Tex Tour.

It is hoped that he will be able to finish the tour without further difficulty. His itinerary will be changed somewhat in order to allow him some open dates for rest and relaxation. His physicians have advised him to take it easy for several weeks, and to calm down his usually strenuous stage act.



## 'COULDN'T DO NO YODELING, SO I TURNED TO HOWLIN'

BY BARRY GIFFORD

"I couldn't do no yodelin' so I turned to howlin'. And it's done me just fine."

Chester Burnett, the Howlin' Wolf, had finally come to California. It was ironic that one of the first of the great bluesmen should be one of the last to make it on the West coast. Just as it took the Beatles and Rolling Stones to bring widespread attention to the original blues artists, it's taken the Wolf's disciples, Muddy Waters, Buddy Guy, Junior Wells and others to clear a path for him to San Francisco.

He was talking about his boyhood idol, country-folk singer Jimmie Rodgers, whom he tried to emulate, found he couldn't "blues-yodel," and took to growlin', refined it to howlin', and took the name of the Wolf. At various times he's been called "Foot" and "Bull Cow."

"I just stuck to the Wolf," he says. "I got that from my grandfather. He used to tell me about the wolves (in Mississippi), how they used to do way back in the days before they cleaned up this country."

The Wolf is an awesome figure. Although nearly sixty years old, he's still a powerful 6-3 and 300 lbs. Back in West Point, Mississippi, where he was born and raised on a plantation, he was first turned on to the guitar and mouth harp by Charlie Patton, a sometime plantation worker and musician. He studied Patton's guitar stylings and later the harp work of Rice Miller, the second Sonny Boy Williamson, who married his sister. Before they were married, whenever Sonny Boy would come to visit, Chester would beg him to play and show him some tricks.

The Wolf met Robert Johnson in Robinsonville, Mississippi. They played together for a short time. But not long after, Johnson was poisoned by a jealous girlfriend. "This is all part of the blues," says Wolf.

"I just like the blues because to me it sounds good. But blues is problems: and singing about them doesn't make things easier, I think—it just takes your mind off it. Your singing ain't gonna help you none; the problem is still there."

The Wolf dug a group called the Mississippi Sheiks, which was composed of the Chatman Brothers (Peter Chatman was Memphis Slim)

and Sam Hill. He points to them as being instrumental in his decision as to what kind of music he wanted to play: "People make their music just like you think about what you want to do. They make their sound and music just like they feel and they sing like they feel. If they felt somebody had taken something from them, that's what they sang about—however they felt. But you take myself: I never did have no ups and downs. I came from a good family, and I come up on a good plantation, and I was treated like a man."

Wolf moved North to Memphis in 1933. He played gigs by himself at first—often working from 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. for 50¢—but decided that it would be better if he got some others to take the load off him. His first band, formed in 1948, had Willie Steele on drums, a piano player named "Destruction," guitarists Willie John and M. T. Murphy, and harp player Junior Parker.

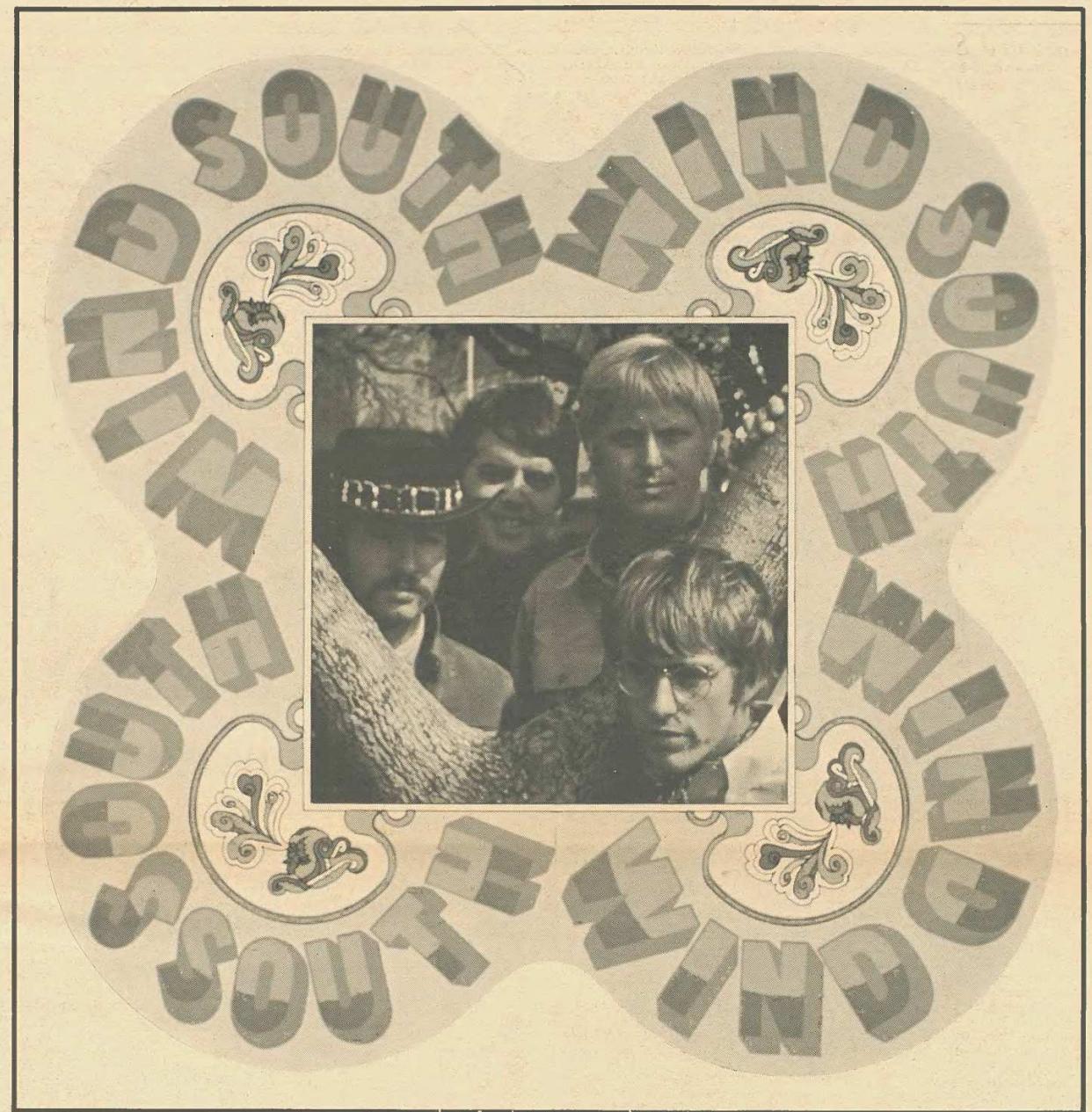
During this time the Wolf also did a daily radio program on KWM in West Memphis. But Ike Turner persuaded him to cut a record for Sun—it was "Saddle My Pony," b/w "Worried All The Time." The record was sent to Chess and they signed him after he'd cut a few sides for RPM, a California label.

He went to Chicago in 1952 and started at a small club on 13th and Ashland. His band stayed behind in Memphis because Wolf thought he'd have a better chance on his own.

He was still a serious student of the blues: "Now I don't think my music has changed much over the years," he says. "Not much really; but, of course, I did have to step up with the tempo. I used to play very slow, but I had to come up with the tempo of today. I went to school for my chords and positions (keys). See, I didn't know my positions when I was playing those slow blues, but over the last few years I went to the Chicago Music School, and they taught me my positions."

The Wolf is mistrusted of record companies, however, and doesn't feel he's always received a fair deal. This is, unfortunately, a common feeling among Negro bluesmen. And because of this, he's decided not to record in the future. "I've got plenty of good material—new material," he claims, "but I'm not gonna give it away. I

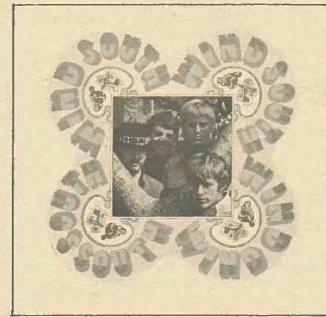
*—Continued on Page 22*



## SOUTHWIND

I usually figure that if you can find two cuts you like on an LP it is worth putting in the library. If you can find any more than that it is time to break out the gold stars. I like eight cuts on this album and I call that a winner, so let a lot of SOUTHWIND blow through your life.

TOM DONAHUE of KSAN, San Francisco

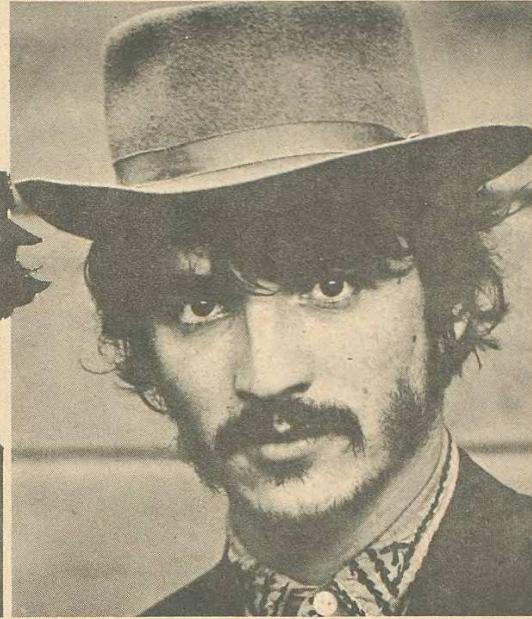




Levon Helm



Richard Manuel



Rick Danko

—Continued from Page 1

"We've played everywhere from Molasses, Texas, to Timmins, Canada, which is a mining town about 100 miles from the tree line," says Robertson, and you can hear the grit when you listen to *Music From Big Pink*. "I pulled into Nazareth," he writes in "The Weight," one of Robertson's four songs on the album. "... was feeling 'bout half past dead ... Hey, mister, can you tell me where a man might find a bed? ... He just grinned and shook my hand ... 'No,' was all he said ..."

There are four others in the band. Like Robertson, three of them came from Canada. At the organ, there is Garth Hudson, who had started out to attend agricultural college until a photograph of his uncle playing trombone in a dance band led him into the study of music theory and harmony. By the time he was 13, he says, he was the only one in London, Ontario, who knew how to play rock and roll. On the bass guitar, there is Rick Danko, who was born the son of a woodcutter in the Canadian tobacco belt village of Simcoe, where he grew up listening to Grand Old Opry on a wind-up Victrola and a battery radio. There was no electricity in his house, he explains, until he was 10. At the piano, Richard Manuel does most of the singing in a style that echoes the faint signal of the John R rhythm and blues show, broadcasting all the way from Nashville over Radio Station WLAC, 1510 on the dial.

"It was that era's Underground radio," remembers Manuel. "I was about 13, and you had to stay up late to get it. You have to remember I was in Stratford, Ontario, at the time."

Organist Garth Hudson was born in London, Ontario to a farming family whose relatives included a number of musicians. "My uncles all

## THE BAND

played in bands and my father had a lot of old instruments around the house. I guess I began to play the piano when I was about five." Garth's high school band was "kind of a vaudeville act" according to him, and it wasn't until later that he began playing rock and roll. "I'd heard country for years though," he says. "My father used to find all the Hoedown stations on the radio and then I played accordion with a country group when I was twelve." After high school, Garth left Canada to form his own group in Detroit. Unlike most rock organists, Garth uses the Lowrey organ which, having a wider variety of orchestral sounds, has a specifically enriching effect on the texture of the band's music.

The only member of the group born in the United States, drummer Levon Helm comes from West Helena, Arkansas, the home of blues harp player Sonny Boy Williamson. "I used to listen to him a lot when I was a kid," he recalls, "but I think my influences are more general than specific." Like the other members of the band, Levon had his own rock group in high school. "It was called The Jungle Bush Beaters if you can believe it, but it was a good group." Richard Manuel is his favorite drummer and Levon doesn't listen to records. "It gets like TV," he remarks. "I once watched TV for six whole months. Didn't do anything else. That's what happens when you spend your time listening. You land

up not playing and that's all I really want to do."

Rick Danko, born in Simcoe, Ontario, began playing guitar, mandolin and violin before high school and played in a band before he reached his teens. He dropped out of high school and joined Ronnie Hawkins when he was seventeen. "It had to do with physical education," he says. "Actually, I always wanted to go to Nashville to be a cowboy singer. From the time I was five, I'd listened to the Grand Ole Opry, the blues and country stations." Rick, who played rhythm guitar before joining The Hawks and now plays bass, doesn't like to think of himself as a musician. "Like I don't read music,"

They all met playing with Ronnie Hawkins, who hired them one by one until, after three years, they quit. They were playing at a night club in the seashore resort of Somers Point, New Jersey, when, in the summer of 1965, Dylan telephoned them.

"We had never heard of Bob Dylan," says drummer Levon Helm, who, as a sharecropper's son from the South Arkansas Delta country, is the only American in the band. "But he had heard of us. He said, 'You wanna' play Hollywood Bowl?' So we asked him who else was gonna be on the show. 'Just us,' he said."

Whether or not Dylan, even in absentia, can be heard on the record as a sixth member of the band, *Music From Big Pink* will have to

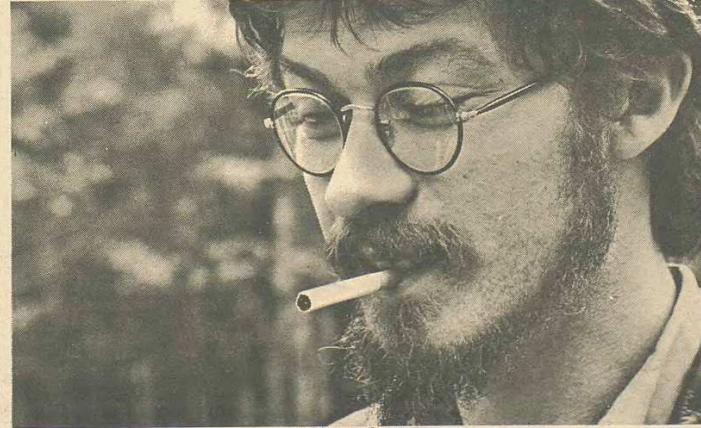
be judged on its own merits, not his. Probably it won't be. In taste, in modesty, in humor and perhaps even in perception, many of those merits tend to coincide, and one of the purest of Dylan's unpublished songs, *I Shall Be Released*, graces the album like a benediction. "They say every man needs protection . . . They say that every man must fall . . . Yet I swear I see my reflection . . . somewhere so high above this wall," the lyrics go, but they don't go without music and, instrumentally, the band vindicates Dylan's taste in choosing them as his backup group in the first place.

What the band plays is country rock, with cadences from W. S. Wolkott's Original Rabbit Foot Minstrel Show and music that tells stories the way Uncle Remus did, with the taste of Red River Cereal and the consistency of King Biscuit Flour. Robertson himself calls it mountain music, "because this place where we are — Woodstock — is in the mountains."

With *Music From Big Pink*, the band dips into the well of tradition and comes up with bucketsful of clear, cool, country soul that wash the ears with a sound never heard before. *Music From Big Pink* is the kind of album that will have to open its own door to a new category, and through that door it may very well be accompanied by all the reasons for the burgeoning rush toward country pop, by the exodus from the cities and the search for a calmer ethic, by the hunger for earth-grown wisdom and a redefined morality, by the thirst for simple touchstones and the natural law of trees. "Isn't everybody dreaming?" Richard Manuel sings, ". . . Then the voice I hear is real . . . Out of all the idle scheming . . . can't we have something to feel?"



Garth Hudson



Robbie Robertson

ELLIOT M. LANDY

# Introducing *nazz*



To listen to the Nazz is to understand immediately what rock and roll is all about. There is an exhilaration and joyfulness to what they are doing which expresses completely the attitude that rock has always sought to express. They play with such finesse and solidity, it amazes me that anything can be so simple yet complex at one and the same time.

The amazingly diverse abilities of the Nazz are represented on this album. Their hard rock is the hardest of the hard. But the ability of these four young men to create truly original and honest ballads, and adorn them with the most melodic and imaginative harmonies since the hey day of the Mamas and Papas will come as a surprise to anyone who thinks that a band can only play it one way or the other.

Todd, Stewkey, Carson, and Thom have created a debut album which immediately places them within the top echelons of the rock hierarchy. They have captured the youthfulness and innocence which has been so lacking from the rock of the past year. They have revitalized the music with their total energy and lack of pretension. And, before they are through, I think they will tear your head apart, and put it back together again.

Jon Landau (Rolling Stone/EYE)



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## PERSPECTIVES: DEATHWISH OF THE HIPPIE ETHIC

BY RALPH J. GLEASON

"Hippie is dead" the signs said and the parade down Haight Street was led by a coffin.

The Psychedelic Shop closed its doors and the official flower line was that hippie was the creation of the mass media and it existed no longer.

In its attack on the mass media, the H/A took to the mass media (the paradox is continual and never discussed) and the charade and press agency which marked the symbolic death of the hippie had as little relation to reality as the mass media coverage of the whole year.

Now, almost a year later, whatever it was that was hippie still seems to exist. The street is just as crowded as ever and the groups clustered on the curb in Berkeley and San Francisco and other cities holding the little signs that say "Monterey," "Seattle," "New York" and the rest are bigger than ever.

Hippie may be dead but empirical observation indicates that there are more long-hairs than there were and the roster of bands expands and the expansion of the visible movement seems endless. I mean, did you see Bill Cosby in a Nehru jacket, beads, John Sebastian glasses and a Rap Brown hairdo on TV?

The hippies are still with us. They are not dead, they've only moved a bit. What is now clogging the streets in New York and Boston and Berkeley and Los Angeles is the second and third generation mass media, mass made, cadre. Born by publicity and created in its own image by the professional hippies of last year.

What seems really dead, though it may be going through a transformation, is the spirit which sparked the thing and which made the huge Be-In and all the other operations a success. Now the movement cannot mount any substantial event involving large numbers of people and continued, energetic planning.

The Carousel Ballroom operation in San Francisco is the prototype hippie death-wish failure. Formed and financed by the hippie bands, run by hippies and operating in an atmosphere of permissiveness, it went broke, in the process antagonizing all the civic authorities. The staff worked hard, there were good, even great, people involved but it ended in disaster.

The initial dream was for the Carousel to be a true community center, with rehearsal halls, workshops, galleries, offices, all involved with the hippie thing.

When the truth came down, it didn't work and the interesting thing is why it didn't work. The reason, I suspect, is deep within the hippie mystique and is a clue to the problems inherent in the whole concept.

The Carousel Ballroom operation didn't work because, when all was said and done, the hippies didn't believe in themselves. They didn't trust their own intuitions and their own capabilities.

The operation was started by a loose association of several bands, including the Dead and the Airplane, a San Francisco lawyer for several bands and Ron Rackow, a businessman drop-out and camp follower of the Dead.

The first move indicated the eventual disaster, now that we have the benefit of hindsight. They signed a contract which was patently inoperable. But they signed it as a device, a gambit to get the hall, thinking they could then manipulate and renegotiate the lease later. They turned the project over to Rackow, a manipulator from another picture, yet.

What was wrong was that they believed in the manipulative society. They believed that you couldn't deal with the straight world by being (in the hippie sense) straight. You had to be devious. You had to manipulate. To do it right wasn't enough.

Paranoia strikes deep.

Once hoist on the petard of this illusion, all was lost. W. C. Fields' flick was called "You Can't Cheat an Honest Man." That's an old con man's line (see Maurer's *The Big Con*) and the corollary of it, as immortalized by the greatest con man of them all, The Yellow Kid Weill, was "in order to get cheated, you have to have larceny in your soul."

They had larceny in their souls, which is why it went down.

There was a heavy series of ego trips, hassles and counter hassles which went on all during the operation. Rackow alternately blasted Bill Graham and sucked up to him. Bills went unpaid and in the end, Fleetwood Mac and Buddy Guy were left stranded when the place closed. Big Brother and the Holding Co. played the last weekend there—for 60% of the door—and that was it.

Bill Graham took it over. In a strange series of group confessional sessions, the Carousel operators tried to explain to the managers and the musicians and the interested others what had happened, but all they could do, really, was to say that Graham had to take it over and operate it. They couldn't.

You can't run a business without somebody in charge. You can't run a restaurant and feed your friends free. You can't . . . you can't . . . you can't. No truly honest account was ever given to the community (just as there has been no statement of the disposal of the funds raised by the KMPX Strikers, now the KSAN disc jockies).

Yes, business is a drag. But then don't get into it. What made the big events of last year work was the unselfishness, the genuine love that was in them. There was plenty of that at the Carousel and it would have worked there if only they had trusted themselves.

"Don't follow leaders," if it works only on the first level, creates a situation where a power figure can emerge. It is a dangerous thing. No one even told Buddy Guy he had come to town for a dance hall that had closed.

There is history and there is a yesterday and, no matter how groovy the groovy ethic is, there are dues.

Bill Graham earned the Carousel. He will run it well and it will last. It will not be the same, but that doesn't mean it will be bad; only different.

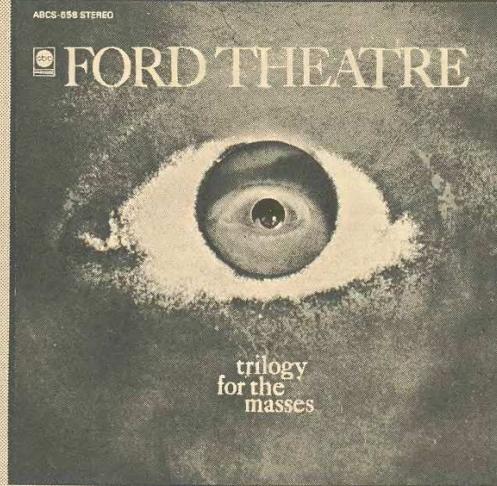
What is bad is that the dream was the victim of lack of trust.

It parallels the whole of American society, in a way and that makes the sadness deeper. It didn't have to be that way. It really didn't.



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## THE ROLLING STONE ROUND TABLE

## BOOKER T &amp; THE M.G.'S

"When Steve and Otis have the outlines of a song, they are joined by the rest of the MG's. Booker and Duck come in first, followed by drummer Al Jackson. Duck is telling Booker about his new stereo record player. 'I got me a nice one, man, with components. You can turn down one of the speakers and hear the words real clear. I been listening to the Beatles. Last night I played Revolver, and on "Yellow Submarine," you know what one of 'em says? I think it's Ringo, he says 'Paul is a queer.' He really does, man. 'Paul is a queer,' bigger's shit.'

"Booker sits at the piano, Duck gets his bass, which has been lying in its case on the worn red rug, and they begin to pick up the chord patterns from Steve and Otis. Al stands by, listening, his head tilted to one side. Duck asks him a question about counting the rhythm, and Steve looks up to say, 'In a minute he'll want to know what key we're in.' Duck sticks out his lower lip. He plays bass as fluently as if it were guitar, plucking the stout steel strings with his first two fingers, holding a cigarette between the other two.

"Booker sits erect, his right hand playing short punctuating notes, his left hand resting on his left knee. Otis is standing now, moving around the room, waving his arms as he conducts these men, his friends, who are there to serve him. He looks like a swimmer, moving effortlessly underwater. Then something happens, a connection is made in Al Jackson's mind, and he goes to the drums, baffled on two sides with wallboard. 'One, two,' he announces. 'One-two-three-four.' And for the first time they are all together; everyone has found the groove."

From a story on the Memphis sound, to be published in the Saturday Evening Post, by Stanley Booth.

So it goes in Memphis, and so it goes with the MG's (Memphis Group). Booker T. Jones, Steve Cropper, Al Jackson and Duck Dunn are the four-man group whose musicianship is well known, not only for its own product, but also for the impersonal and recording session backing of artists like Albert King, Carla Thomas, Sam and Dave, Eddie Floyd and Otis Redding.

Stanley Booth's excerpted interlude from the Stax session on which "Dock of the Bay" was done explains as well as anything what goes on. When they were in San Francisco last month, the MG's put a few thoughts into the tape recorder about many of the things they have been involved with. Booker was present at the beginning of the taping, left after a while, and later Al Jackson joined. It's amazing.

—Jann Wenner

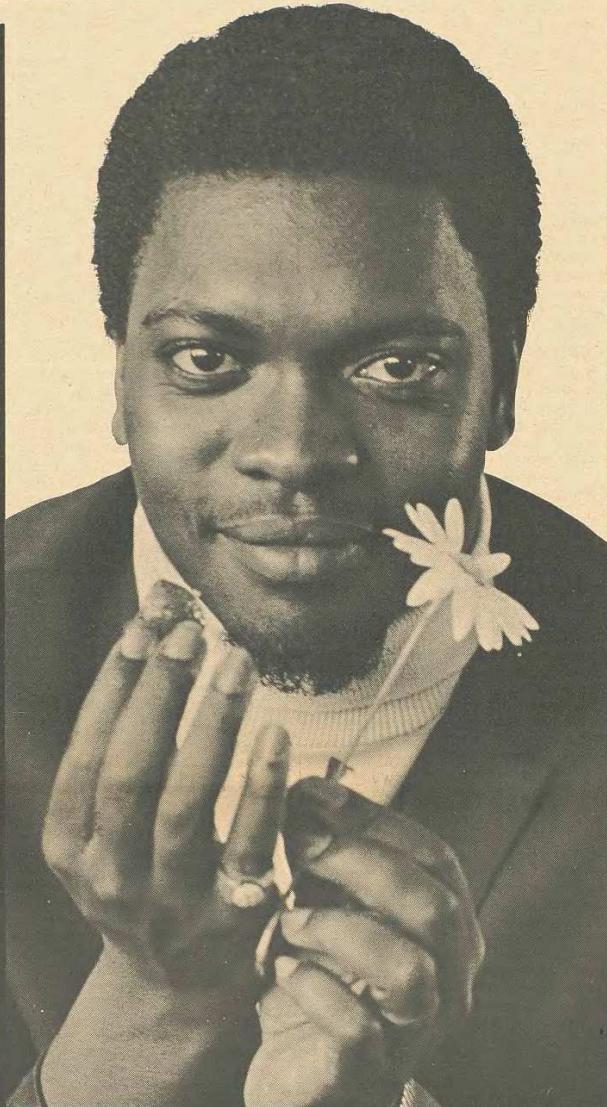
#### KNOCK ON WOOD EDDIE FLOYD

Jann: Booker, you do the song live in your show, how do you make up for the vocal?

Booker: We don't really do that on our show.

Jann: I heard it last night.

Booker: I know, but they just called it. I didn't know we were going to play it. They just pulled that as a trick—we weren't supposed to play it. I wasn't on that record and I think it's a good record. I remember Steve asking me what I thought about it when the group first did it; he had a much lighter sound on it when they first played it. It wasn't mixed like that was and you know, I thought it was a good record, a "pop" record. I think the guitar player on it sounds kind of messed up; the guitar player and the bass player screwed off; everybody else sounds fine. Those are the best two parts, the guitar line and the bass line.



Jann: Steve, how did you write the song?

Steve: Just like you write any song, you just get together and see what you come up with. It was written basically from the inspiration of an idea. I don't remember now who came up with the idea of the title "Knock On Wood," whether it was Eddie or myself. I can recall when we finished the song, we did it in the hotel room, real late at night, and we were so happy about it we called the trumpet player Wayne Jackson, a staff man.

He got off work at 1:30 and we told him to come over to the hotel and help us get some horn lines into it, that's how happy we were about the song. When I look back on it now, we must have really thought we had something. What ingredient made it a hit, I don't know. I've always dug it, the main thing I've always dug is the bass line. Until Duck came along to the session, we didn't have the bass line, and to me it's a vital part of the song.

Listening to it now, it's the first time I've heard the actual record in some time. You do hear it in clubs, everybody does it and of course, like you said, we do it on stage. I wish I could get back to the follow-through on the initial thought more often because every lyric has mean-

ing to the title, and of course some of the things we've written lately tend to stray and then come back and stray and that's just the way things go sometimes.

Duck: Well, I don't know. When we did the session, I dug it and I heard it back and I think Steve deserves a lot of credit because he did the mixing. It just didn't sound that big on the play back. Steve messed with that thing for about a week. It didn't have that pulse that it has there, and I think Steve deserves credit because he really took it to his heart to get this thing right. It sounded thin, back then, in fact we were having troubles anyway with the bass, and the bass was distorting, if they could have heard, oh man, the bass sounded like it had fuzz tone on it.

Jann: How did you come up with the bass line for it?

Duck: I don't know. I'll tell you the truth: I couldn't find anything to play on it and the bass line is a bass line that any bass player should learn when he first starts playing. It sounds like a beginner's line. The simplicity of it.

#### SOUL MAN

SAM AND DAVE

Booker: Yeah, man that's a groovy record. I played the tambourine on

it, just set there and sort of grooved all the way through it. You know, that tune was built around a whole tambourine part. There's not much of a story to it.

Steve: Booker came in playing the tambourine one day and we said "Man, let's get some musicians."

Booker: And so what happened is that Steve and Ike were in the studio. Ike had an idea, and Steve had this guitar line and then I think David came in and tried to put some words to what they were doing; and then Duck came in and started playing the bass line; and I guess about that time Al and I moseyed in and it just sort of evolved like that. It was a spontaneous record all the way. Sam and Dave were there at the right time, everything was there at the right time.

Jann: Was it meant to be their song or was it just a song to be . . .

Booker: It was meant to be theirs but we didn't know exactly what it was going to be.

Jann: What gives the guitar line such tremendous power?

Steve: I just was trying to think what evolved the intro. Ike just had some changes and I just started playing some riffs to it. It just came out that way. The changes were there before the guitar player, as far as the intro. The little, high pitched answer in the middle of the song behind "I'm a Soul Man" came one cut before this master and we made fifteen cuts or so before I started doing the thing where I do the slide in the middle of the song. It was way down in the session and it just kind of gives it new life. On the next cut everybody says "yea." It was a well put together record like Booker says, it was spontaneous but it was done over a period of days, you know, one day they did one thing, next day they did the next thing. Everybody that heard what was there picked up and added to it, everybody was digging the rhythm and the whole thing.

Jann: How much of the song was together when it started?

Steve: Well, when it first started Ike just had some changes on the piano and then it built into that. I worked with him a while and came up with a guitar line; he worked with Duck a while and came up with a bass line. David and Isaac put words to it, Al put the drum beat to it. The horns were worked up on the session. Sam and Dave were taught the song as soon as they got into the session.

Duck: I don't know if you all noticed the same thing I did: that record reminds me of the rhythm of the old Bo Diddley. I think what Steve did and particularly with what Al did, man, it's an attention-grabber. Man, you hear that and wow, you know.

Steve: It's derivative of the old blues thing. It's a good rendition of our band; this is the way we basically sound.

Booker: Didn't you say you were thinking about that "Killing Floor?"

Steve: Yes, I was thinking along that line whenever I came up with the rhythm of it.

Jann: Among so many of the great hits from Stax, that is one of the few that immediately stand out as superlative. Do you see a certain way in which that stands out?

Steve: Well like I said earlier what I meant when I said it was a good rendition of the way our band sounds, it sort of captured everybody on the record. Al's got a good drum beat, people are digging the guitar line, the bass line is good, the piano line is good, the horn lines are good, the lyrics are good, the singers are good, the tambouriner is fantastic.

Booker: Right. I think that record

is mixed well. If you listen to the drum mix on that with the sock cymbal in the bass, man that's about one of the best drums I ever heard. Everything he's done comes out.

**Steve:** It's a good record that shows off everybody in the studio so to speak, without anyone conflicting. It's not cluttered; it's done very well; all the parts happen to fit. A lot of the sessions don't come off that good, aside from the song being a great song, a good idea and a soul thing, I think it's a fantastic idea. It was from the git go. Musically, I think it's a good rendition of the Stax sound.

**Duck:** You know what else is there is a little catchy? Usually you hear a song in our thing we do two verses, a bridge, a horn ensemble. Three verses before a bridge and you're looking for something else but they hit you with another verse. We make that mistake on the stage sometimes. We'll play two verses and we'll want to go right to that bridge.

**Steve:** It's kind of different; it's a natural deal to do. Two verses would be eight or sixteen or twelve bars, you double up and then you go somewhere...

**Booker:** The melody, too, is simple. I think that's what helped it sell so big because people can remember that easily, can identify with it easily, can sing the words and remember everything that's happening.

#### "MIDNIGHT HOUR"

##### WILSON PICKETT

**Steve:** Well, there's a lot of things you can credit that song to. There's a lot of things behind why it was written and how it was written and the whole thing. I'd like to start off by saying that I think Wilson did a tremendous job on the solo. We have thirty-five registered cover tunes and to this day nobody has topped his performance on that record. I don't think they ever will. It's done in every night club across the country and abroad, too. That's something to be proud of. I think there's more there than just the fact that two people wrote a song and that was it.

At that time it was one of the first marriages between people from other parts of the country and our sound. Here came Wilson Pickett, who had been a soul singer for years based in New York. He was big in New York and he was like nothing anywhere else as far as big-big. He made the New York circuit clubs and stuff like that which was good and of course the things he did with the Falcons were good. He came down also with Jerry Wexler. It was kind of an experience for everybody really to work with somebody like that. At that time New York was far away. Somebody came up and says, "Hey, write a tune for Wilson, he's coming in and we've got to produce Wilson Pickett." We all knew him, because I knew Eddie Floyd. At that time Eddie was in the Falcons too, and he was talking about Wilson being lead singer.

I didn't even know the man other than that one thing. We didn't want to write ballad stuff because the rock beat was happening then. I grabbed the only album of his I could find in the studio, which was two or three cuts which he did at the Apollo and at the end of each fade out he'd say "Yeah, wait for the midnight hour, baby," and go into this thing. I thought that would be a heck of an idea for a tune and when he came in I presented it to him and he said that's a good idea and he said "I've got this little rhythm thing I've been working on for a good while." It was really nothing to it, it was just a couple of changes and we just started working with this. That was where it came from.

When I wrote the tune I had it going in a completely different way. Basically the changes were the same, basic feel was the same but there was a different color about it. During the session Jerry said, "Why don't you pick up on this thing here?" He said this was the way the kids were dancing, they were putting the accent on two. Basically, we have been one beat accented with an afterbeat, it was like "boom dah," but here this was a thing that went "un-chaw," just the reverse as far as the accent goes. The back beat was somewhat delayed and it just put it in that

rhythm, and Al and I have been using that as a natural thing now, ever since we did it. We play a downbeat and then two is just almost on but a little bit behind only with complete impact. It turned us on to a heck of a thing.

**Al:** It was different...

**Steve:** There's a lot of things involved in this song. The bass line is a tremendous bass line. I came up with most of the horn lines, but the horn players do a hell of a job on the thing. It was a good feeling session, and out of that session of "Midnight Hour" there were four hit singles. "Don't Fight It" was another big record out of the same session. "I'm Not Tired," that slow blues with a beat kind of record, that was a big record; and "It's A Man's Way" was a pretty big record for Wilson. The whole thing evolved around the first session with Wilson Pickett and this happened to be the top side that came out, so it was really a classic tune, so to speak, because everybody is involved, the producers, the engineers, every horn player.

It's good to look back on. It does make you feel good I guess. The thing that turned me on so much since it started is the thirty-five covers and that makes you feel good when that many people want to cut that song, they feel it's good enough to cut.

**Duck:** Well the bass thing was really Jerry Wexler's idea. Like Steve said, we had it going another way. Jerry came out and did the jerk dance.

**Steve:** Yeah that's where he got it from. We had the funk but he knew what the kids were doing.

**Jann:** Jerry came out of the booth and started dancing?

**Duck:** To the jerk.

**Steve:** Yeah, he actually came out and said, "do it this way, this is the way they're doing it." Just like I said, we had the funk that he was looking for yet he knew what the kids were dancing to.

**Al:** To tell you really, you wouldn't believe the way it was played on the floor and the way it is now. When I would count the tune off, Duck would stay where I counted it. He was playing the top and Steve and I were playing the middle. It sounded really as though the two and four were late. It was so far behind that you wouldn't believe it and how it came out like this, we don't know. Then it became natural for Steve and I to play the delayed two-four after that.

**Jann:** Did Jerry's coming down to do this tune make that great a change of direction?

**Al:** To me it did.

**Steve:** I think it did. I think it was the first time we had a chance to work with somebody that was up on the music scene from a different part of the country. We had been doing our own kind of thing, the way we wanted to do it.

**Al:** The thing about us is that like there's four of us and like we're working every day and like we don't really know what's happening out there. We're in our own backyard. Coming out on gigs as the MG's is a great asset because we opened up that gate and stepped out of our yard and found out what's going on. We only have our own world of living in Memphis. The only thing we go by is from records, like we've been sitting here doing, listening to records, listening to what other artists and producers are doing and other musicians. Sometimes it becomes difficult. That's one of the reasons, as the saying goes, "If it's not funky, forget it," because this is the world, we live in a funky world.

#### "RESPECT"

##### ARETHA FRANKLIN

**Duck:** Now that's Aretha. What do you say about Aretha? She can sing very well.

**Al:** But along with Aretha, I think it was a well-produced record. She does a beautiful job on the tune, but I will say I have to give credit to the band too.

**Steve:** Very definitely. I dig Aretha, I think the producers have done a heck of a job even though they use different people in different sessions. I don't know what it was, company, manager or what the problem was, but you know Aretha went a long

way without having a hit record. Why she's so big now? She's still Aretha. She was always big but something held her down so I think this marriage of the new musicians is good.

**Al:** Yeah, I think Jerry Wexler had a large part in bringing Aretha out to what she is today. Aretha carries you back to church in everything that she does. In arranging it's so simple, nothing takes away from her and then getting back to like the ensemble, the tune arrived, it said something. This is what I was saying about the other tune on Diana, it was just there, nothing really happened.

**Jann:** Nothing comes through, it's just decoration.

**Steve:** Right.

**Al:** This thing really says something.

**Steve:** It plays a definite part. In other words if you take that away from the song, then the song lacks something.

**Al:** It was really a part of the tune although we had cut that tune originally on Otis Redding. I don't know if Steve was writing with Otis on that tune or not, or whether he wrote that himself.

**Steve:** Oh no, he had it by himself.

**Al:** I can remember a conversation that Otis and I had about life: we were speaking about life in general, the up's and down's and what have you. I said "What you are griping about, you're on the road all the time, all you can look for is a little respect when you come home." He wrote the tune from our conversation. We laughed about it quite a few times. In fact, Otis laughed about it all the way to the bank. But I think Aretha did a beautiful job on that.

**Duck:** All those people on there are Memphis musicians. Except I think the drummer and Spooner. Spooner is originally from Alabama.

**Steve:** I'd like to make a comment on what Al just said that might be information toward whatever is happening at Stax. I would say 50% to 75% of all songs we cut come out of a conversation. They don't come out of David Porter going home and sweating, staying up until 3:00 in the morning, sitting up trying to think of a title. It comes natural, the natural things are the ones we hang on to. We'll all be talking in front, you know, and somebody will say something and everybody will turn around because everybody's always looking for titles, and they see who wrote it down first, just out of conversation, that's where most of the hits come from, like Al said he was talking to Otis.

#### "HOLD ON I'M COMING"

##### SAM AND DAVE

**Steve:** Sam and Dave are the type people who come in and learn a song in ten or fifteen minutes. They don't hang you up.

**Duck:** Like we usually book our sessions for like four days, you know, that gives the producer a chance, a day to work with the artists, rehearsal with the band the next day, the next two days possibly we cut, you know or something like that.

**Jann:** What conversation did that come from?

**Duck:** Oh, if I told you, you really wouldn't want to write this.

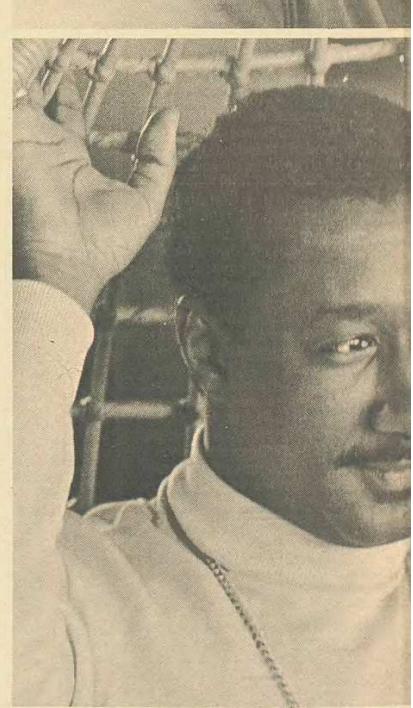
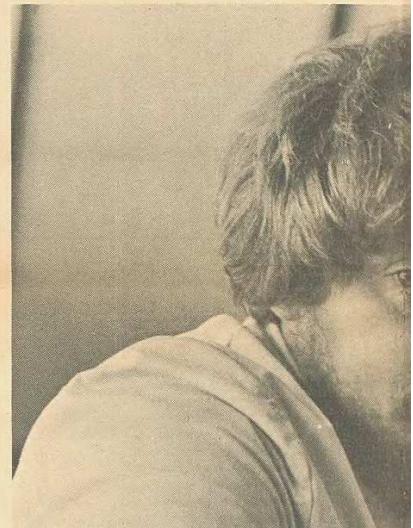
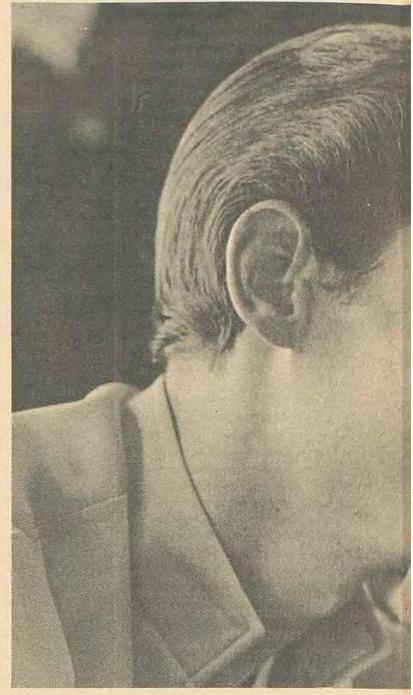
**Steve:** It's not a question of would he like to write it, or not, would people like to read it.

**Al:** This is off the record, definitely off the record.

**At this point, Al insisted that the tape recorder be turned off, if he was going to tell me the story of the song, "Hold On, I'm Coming." Without violating his confidence, because I had heard the story before, this is what happened: Porter and Hayes were in the studios working on a song, when Porter left for a minute to go to the john. After a while, Hayes went to find him, calling for him in every room, and finally the bathroom. He was in the john; hearing Hayes' impatient yells, Porter shouted "Hold on, I'm coming."**

From that idea and all, we had a hit record on Sam and Dave. Sam and Dave are two beautiful cats.

**Steve:** Let me add this to the conversation: The first thing you said was, "there's another Stax classic." By it being a classic, it just means





one thing: there were more people involved than just a writer, a producer, a singer or any particular musicians or engineer. This is another song which was the work of a whole body. There is an idea injected from every person that evolved around this record. That's what makes it a classic.

Basically my same comments on "Midnight Hour." It took more than one person to come up with this kind of a record. It wasn't just because the singer sings good or because the song was written good, there's more to it than that. This is another song, I think Al mentioned, that came in basically different from the way the record came out. It came in with rhythm changes, it came in with a melody, but it came out with a distinct bass line, a distinct guitar part, a distinct drum rhythm.

*Al:* Beautiful horn lines.

*Steve:* Right, most of them were written on the session. The intensity of Sam and Dave was greater on the last cut than the previous twenty-five cuts, so to speak, you know. It just kept building, we'd cut three or four cuts and then we'd go up to the control room and we'd all listen and Al would say, "What do you think about this?" I'd say, "I don't know, Why don't we do this?" and Duck would say, "Well, that's good, why don't we do this?" It just kept going that way all day long.

Going back to "Midnight Hour," one of the things Al mentioned to me while we were sitting there listening and we sort of cornered ourselves off and we said, "Do you remember the way we did 'Midnight Hour' with that delayed backbeat?" I said yes and he said "Do you think it might fit on this?" I said I didn't know but we should try it. Two cuts, we went back into the studio and the first cut completely turned everybody on, as far as the engineer, the writers, the singers all the other musicians involved that had been injecting ideas all along. Everybody was immediately turned on, we made one more cut and that was it. Not because we injected a delayed backbeat, but it was just like a topping to the record. The one thing it needed was that extra punch and feel.

In that record I'm happy with everything. I'll tell you another thing that knocks me out. I think Al stands out more on that record than on a lot of records. I think Al's rhythm—I mean Al is a modest cat and all that sort of thing, he stands there looking at it—he's a fantastic drummer. He's the greatest guy in the world to work with. Because he's this good, he doesn't try to overpower or shadow anything. If he can't complement it then he'd rather not even be in the room. This is his whole action.

On this particular record he's playing subdued as far as playing simple and straight, no wild turns, no wild riffs and that sort of thing and he stands out like "zow." Every bass drum lick you hear, every backbeat, the sock is just so definite, everything he does, every cymbal lick is appropriate. That's why I dig the record. Plus it being a good song and I've got to hand like and David a lot of credit, it's one of the best tunes I think they've ever written.

#### "BORN UNDER A BAD SIGN"

ALBERT KING

*Duck:* Jann asked me, he says, "do you play on the Albert King record?" I says, "yeah, yeah," he goes over there and plays it and plays the one track that Booker played bass on.

*Steve:* One that Booker played?

*Al:* Right: Booker played bass on that one cut.

*Steve:* That's wild.

*Al:* It's hard to say, man; to me he's great. You take B.B., Albert and all your blues guitars and what have you. Everybody says something different. They each have a different approach to blues.

*Steve:* They sure do, distinctive.

*Al:* Right, you can tell who's who, because B.B. is so polished and so beautiful.

*Steve:* Well, you know what their approach is, it's a self thing. It's soul. Soul is distinctive, it stands out.

*Al:* When Albert approaches anything, he's a defensive type person

and you can tell it in his deliverance in a tune, and for some strange reason as a blues singer, really, I dig his voice. I know a lot of people say they dig his guitar work, but I really dig his voice. On that same album there's a ballad he does, one of the old standard ballads.

You take a standard like "The Very Thought of You," for a man to attack blues the way he does, he approached this one so beautiful and so smooth that it created such a beautiful mood. I just happened to hear him do this tune live one night. Like he had been playing his regular thing all night, the blues scene, you know and he made a complete change.

Booker and I went down to hear Albert this night, and we were digging him and the whole house was with him. Then all at once he made this drastic change, all this funk and all this guitar that he had been playing, to sing a tune like "The Very Thought of You" was—it's like singing "Stardust." Wow! The whole house was really hushed. It was unbelievable to hear this man make a change like that. I plan to do more things with him like this. [Al Jackson is Albert's producer.]

I also plan to really open him up which is really hard to do. It's hard to open up a man that the public really digs. Some dig him as a vocalist, but the mass dig him as a guitarist. Well, it's hard to get a complete story in there and let Albert play with anything else, so I plan to just open him up and let him go for himself and let him play the songs he wants to. To me, he is the greatest. With all respect to B.B. and everybody else, Albert to me is the greatest.

*Jann:* Duck, what do you think of Booker's bass playing?

*Duck:* Booker is a genius. What do you say about Booker? He plays anything, guitar, actually his instrument in college was trombone. Wasn't he drum major up there at Indiana?

*Al:* No, no his axe was trombone.

*Duck:* Yeah, but he was drum major. He was head of the class. Wasn't he a drum major at Indiana? On the "Born Under A Bad Sign" song, that's his bass line, I just played it. Most of the time, I'm actually just a little lucky. I guess the only bass lines that were really mine were those lines on "Respect," "Knock on Wood" and "Hold On, I'm Coming," but most of the time they usually get an idea when they write those songs. I usually try to go from there but sometimes I get a little wild and overplay.

*Al:* No one in Booker's family is musically inclined. When I first met Booker, he was just beginning to learn to play bass and we played some gigs around Memphis together with other bands. He had a lousy conception of time when he was a bass player, but he worked on it. So what can you say about a kid that comes from a family that doesn't have any musical background at all?

You take Duck, he's a bass player, a darn good bass player. As I know of, nobody in his family is musically inclined yet he plays bass. My father was a bass player, but I chose to play drums. I don't have the musical ability or the musical concept that Booker has. So where did it come from? It's hard to say. Booker even attempts to play drums sometimes. Like during a rehearsal bit for a session, I may go out for a coke or something, I'll come back and he's trying to play the drums and he'll ask me different things about the drums. Any other instrument, he'll pick it up with the greatest of ease and he will play it. When Rufus Thomas first recorded the Stax hit, "Cause I Love You," he's playing baritone sax on that. Some of the things we've done, "Get On That Big Bird," he's playing guitar on that. "Tribute to a King," by William Bell, Booker is playing guitar on that.

He plays piano, organ. You wonder sometimes. I look at him in amazement and wonder sometimes where did he get all the talent that he has because it seems like no instrument will hang him up. I can recall one session that he played tuba on a Sam and Dave session. I can't think of the tune right now. If we need

vibes, he would play a vibe part for you and then if we want strings for tunes, he'd write the string arrangements or he would call in Noah Gilbert, who is in charge of the Memphis symphony and he'd write the strings for the tune and he'd play them and he'd just look at it. Really, where does it come from? It's amazing. I guess all people with a gift like that are temperamental people, and that's one thing about him, he's very temperamental. Get him in a bad mood, and you'll have to bring him out of it. Other than that he's beautiful.

*Steve:* As far as Booker is concerned, I've worked with a lot of people, a lot of people outside of our studio. I think we have the best marriage of people alive today to work basically 365 days a year with the same thought in mind, and this includes the president, the vice-president, the secretaries, the musicians and everything that evolves around Stax. I know of no other company in the world or no other group of people working around music that have this sort of marriage, that every day is for today and that everybody lives for tomorrow to make Stax a better company.

Out of the musicians I've worked for, I think Booker is the most versatile along with being talented, the most versatile musician I've ever run across. I don't know if Al mentioned this or not, I caught part of what he was saying about him playing this instrument and that instrument and that instrument. I saw Booker four years ago pick up a violin and he had a sound going on the violin in about ten minutes.

I've been playing with my granddad's violin since I was six years old. My granddad used to play fiddle a long time ago, country fiddle. To this day I can't hit the first note on a violin; I can take it and make sounds playing it like a guitar, picking it but not bowing it. Booker never had a violin in his hand and he picked it up and started playing it. There's not an instrument that I know of that if Booker put his mind to it he couldn't conceive that instrument. He's that versatile, he's a musical genius, so to speak.

The good thing about Booker is that he doesn't evolve himself about one point except the point that he evolves himself around is digging basically Stax, digging R&B, digging simple music. Basically, I think he digs the MG's. He doesn't feel that there's anybody in the group that doesn't fit into whatever his train of thought is. He's much more of a musician than any of the three of us; we're basically just the rhythm section to complement Booker T. On the other hand he feels that he's just the organ player that complements the rhythm section and this is what makes him a great man and that's why we love Booker T. That's why the group is what it is today—because we all dig each other and we all work as one.

To go along with some of the things Al said, if there's anything we need done, string arrangements, this arrangement, that arrangement, if we don't know how to do it, all we do is to call Booker and he can come up with a solution to it. He's just a groovy cat, he's out of sight.

I think we're fortunate, too—I think Al would agree with me—to have a guy on our side that has this musical knowledge. People that get that far along in music or know that much about music generally tend to get with themselves, they start hiding in a corner, not in a corner, but they start doing things on their own, and they are aggressive about it and they want things done their way and they don't take anybody's influence or they don't listen to anybody's ideas, they want to do it their way and their way alone.

Booker has never injected this kind of feeling. He feels that he needs the other people to help make whatever he wants to do. And this is good, this is very good. Another thing I have to compliment Booker on: I think in the last year, he's written his best stuff as far as simple R&B funky songs, he's really working at it, he's working at it hard and he's done a heck of a job.

"Everybody Loves A Winner," of course all the William Bell stuff,

BARON WOLMAN

he's written some Albert King tunes that stand out and are very good. "Tribute to a King" is a fantastic song. I dig this song, not because I loved Otis alone—Otis deserved "Tribute to a King," because he was King, King of Soul, King of Stax and King of Everything that evolved around us. If you just listen to the lyrics in that song, they tell that whole story. I've been writing for years and I would never have been able to get all that information in three minutes. No way it could be done, but Booker came up with it.

Jann: How is Stax adjusting without Otis?

Steve: It just continued. It started continuing two days after Otis' death. Jim Stewart, president and owner of Stax, called everybody together one morning. Of course, everybody was still feeling probably more than they'd feel about anybody. Everybody was basically still in shock and so forth.

Jim came in and he said one simple thing: "Man, we've got to keep going." The next day we went into a session, not to try to prove anything or to try to forget what was going on but just to try to find out ourselves and find out where we were. We knew we had to continue even though Otis did play a very definite part in our whole life at Stax. From that day on, I think, actually every musician, every writer and every producer has done more work, spent more time and more effort in trying to better the company and better everybody around.

Al: What Steve is saying is that we realized we could never replace Otis, so we spent all the time we can really trying to make a William Bell, trying to make a Johnny Taylor, to take up the slack and all that we lost in Otis and, I must say, the Bar-Kays. All of us that spent a lot of time with this young group; we saw something in them that we couldn't even project ourselves.

Steve: I think basically we saw ourselves all over again. But they started at a much higher level than we started.

Al: It was like looking at us, but us taking over at that particular interval to go farther. As young as they were they had creative minds, the way they wanted to do things. So we feel that together we could try to get our other artists to the point where they would be good standard artists.

When you hear them, when you hear an Albert King, you'll appreciate an Albert King; you hear a William Bell; or Johnny Taylor, whatever it may be. The public had accepted Otis, they'd accepted Sam & Dave, but not like Otis.

Otis was just altogether different, even from the first day that we met him, very quiet. He sat in the studio all day, that day. We were working with someone else. It had been a hard day, that we put in a day—even Steve was playing piano that day because Johnny Jenkins was playing guitar—on some tunes Steve would play piano, on some tunes he would play rhythm or guitar. We had worked the whole day, not even knowing that Otis was there for an audition or what.

He was just the driver for Johnny Jenkins and at the end of the day Otis mentioned that he could sing and he asked us to give it a try. He proved that he could sing and that he had a style of his own. We did go about the changing of Otis, because, like Steve said before, he had this country feel and at that particular time I don't think we had the knowledge for the country feel, not that we had that much more knowledge of R&B, but we had lived that life so we stuck it out and tried to make it with that.

He proved himself that way and one of his albums—I don't know if Steve mentioned this, but I know that several times he talked with me—and one of the things he wanted to do was to go to the Copacabana and record an album like Sam Cooke did. He really wanted to do that. It didn't make any difference to him, the material, whether it was country or western, rhythm or blues, or what it was. He had a feel for it, his way.

**Stax-Volt and Stax related records were not the only ones discussed. We also played a number of blues oriented sides and asked for opinions on those. The selection of tunes that appears below is not representative, as we heard records by at least a dozen other groups. These are just some.**

#### "GROOVIN' IS EASY"

##### THE ELECTRIC FLAG

Booker: I like that. They did a lot of things in that one like we might have done them, or we do a lot of things the way they did that. The horns have a good sound and the guitar player plays very good. Is that Mike Bloomfield playing that? It seems very well organized and well put together and makes a lot of sound. It's got a good feel to it. It strays away every now and then from the real groove, but it always goes back on that E-flat thing, you know.

Jann: What about the organ line?

Booker: The triplets that he was playing? That's hip. He didn't play that well I think, but the idea was very high, I mean I don't put it down.

Steve: Well, I'm kind of partial to Mike Bloomfield for a couple of reasons. I met Mike when we did the Monterey Pop Festival, and became a real close friend to Mike and I don't get to see or hear from him as much as I'd like to. A few months later I heard he was dedicating a tune to Otis and I on the album. It's just a good feeling to have friends in the business.

I had been digging Mike before then. I heard several things he had done. My impression of him is that he's one of the best white blues guitar players around and there's several out there in that same kind of bag. I'm not weighing him against any other or vice-versa, I just think he's one of the best. Everything he does is done in good taste with a lot of control. He doesn't play frantic or try to overplay like a lot of people do. Just real well done.

As far as that particular track, I dig it. It's like Booker says, the thought involved and the arrangements are things we would try to do in session and that we would try to pull off. The idea is good, the melody is good, the singers sound real good; the engineering's great and the production is good. That's about all I can say.

Duck: I've always dug Mike Bloomfield. I met him, too, in Monterey with Steve, and the drummer Buddy Miles. I know you all remember him, he was in New York with us that time. You remember the drummer.

Steve: He was a great kid.

Duck: They're just good people. The music is great. I know they respect us and we respect them.

#### "SMILING PHASES"

##### TRAFFIC

Duck: Now I like that. He's singing good, the band was playing good. The only thing I didn't like was where it was faded out, they should have stayed right where they were because they were cooking.

Al: The groove again went back to the four. The only thing I can say to Jim (Capaldi) is to keep it up, it was beautiful. They lost me with the fade; I think they should have gone back to the title to ride it out, you know. It had to be a heck of an engineer on that set, I say, because that top drum sound is beautiful. I'm not up, I must admit, on this type of music, but speaking from a drummer's point of view, it's basically the same, it's a groove.

Steve: Well, I'm kind of partial to Stevie Winwood since "Gimme Some Lovin'." The tune has always knocked me out. In this particular track, which I don't recall hearing before, I noticed the same intensity. I can tell it's basically the same guy doing it, or I feel it is, or it is produced by the same cat, or something. As far as song-wise, I like the simplicity. I don't know what they were going for, or why in this particular track they changed that simple groove, but in "Gimme Some Lovin'" they kept sticking back to the title, just pounding it in. This is the kind of thing we do every day. I like that in a song but the other intensity is there, the feeling of rhythm and the whole thing. I think it is great, I dig it. The lyrics were good, I think

the melody is great, the melody is fantastic. I don't think the lyrics stuck out as good as they should have. I don't know what to lay that on, maybe the lyrics weren't that simple. I don't know. I didn't recall everything they said, but I did notice the melody was real good, excellent. The title didn't have that sudden impact. I'd dig meeting Stevie Winwood.

I hope Stevie sticks with the funky stuff because I think it's gonna give him a better chance to work out. It sounds like the drummer feels whatever this kid is trying to come off with. He's there, not as though he's telling him what to play but as though he's complementing whatever the idea is.

Al: Right. I don't know how they went about it, recording the tune but to me Jim did a heck of a job. The change in meter from the intro to that A was a groove.

#### "CRY TO ME"

##### THE ROLLING STONES

Al: That tune grabbed me. Nobody could do that tune greater than Solomon Burke. It is a beautiful tune. I think if anybody recorded it, regardless of who, it would be a hit.

Jann: What do you think of the drummer, Charlie Watts?

Al: The only thing I can ever say, really say, about drummers is that when he plays, regardless of what it is that he is doing, as long as he has injected the feel that complements what's going on around him at the time, it's beautiful. When a drummer goes off from what's going on around him, then I am going to disagree with it. I believe in the drummer being the base of the rhythm—sure he can make turns and what have you—but I never believed in overplaying a tune.

Steve: Don't mean to break your train of thought, but I wanted to say that the only time a drummer should take a turn is when it makes the next downbeat sound better than the downbeat before. That's the only reason for a turn. If you turn, like when you're at the end of an eight-bar pattern and you turn it into the ninth bar which is bar one of the next eight bars, bar one has got to sound better than the eighth bar of that first eight bars. I'm saying, that's why you turn; to push it more. That's something Al's best at.

Al: Then a lot of times it doesn't work out to play a turn, if you notice like in "Hold On, I'm Coming." I never play a turn, or nothing. I kept it solid all the way. I changed my bass drum rhythm to go along with the melody but never made a turn because of what Steve was playing and what Duck was playing; there was no room for a turn.

In some tunes the straighter you play it, the better off. You try to stay out of the way because you are selling the tune itself and not the drummer. The drummer has a part to play. It's important that he plays it, and on a solid groove tune like that, how fancy could you get? What would it really matter? Would it really change that tune, would it really sell that tune, regardless of how you may cut up with that tune? You would be taking away from the tune and the artist. So the simpler you keep it, the better the product.

We've been asked—I don't mean to get off from that particular record—but some guys came over to the hotel today and they were asking about why it is we play tunes different. Well, of course we don't come out on the road—we're not a road band—in the first place we're a studio group. We dig this, this is a greater challenge to us, but we don't believe in playing the tune the same over and over again. That way you become stale, you become mechanical, just like in the studio you play it down, you play it down, and then we'll get together, something is missing and then we'll say "Let's take a different approach to it," and you come out and it's just like starting over again although you've made twenty cuts.

Make it a first tune in your mind, you know, you never played it before. There was a tune that the MG's had been playing for like two or three years called "Soul Junction." We had always played it one way and then while in New York we

recorded that tune with Tom Dowd. He said, "Listen, you're playing it as though you just know it verbatim, you know, that's it." So we took another stab at it like we'd never played that tune before. It has paid off several times, because you can become stale with a tune.

So when we go and play a gig and after we've played the familiar air of the tune, everybody knows what we're playing, then we try to get away from it. Not to go creative but to go loose for whatever you feel at the time. If Steve hits on something, I'll follow him, by the time that I think that one of them should have found something to do because I'm sick of it now, then I will go somewhere even if I have to change the tempo, change the time or change the rhythm.

Steve: We do that on stage a lot. If a guy starts something, go with it, don't fight it. If you fight it, you're gonna kill his groove and kill your groove. It's natural with us; it's the way we feel.

Al: It's like four people being up there, but four people as one. How much can Booker say on organ? How much can Steve say solo wise on guitar? How far can Duck go with only a rhythm section? There are no horns. There's nothing else to take over so we've got to make this color change, something creative, something dynamic has got to happen now. You just don't take it out because the record was three minutes and that was the tune, you know you take it out. You find something to do with it and in finding something to do with other tunes as a group to come up with a new thing, or a new tune.

Steve: That's where it's at. Talking about the Stones, I dig the Stones, I've always dug the Stones. I've dug them for a lot of their records. I don't really know the group as well as I would like to know them. Some people you learn quick, some people it takes a good while to get into whatever is going on. I don't really know the history of the group. A lot of records I can hear and I listen to it and I say, "I know what that man is trying to get over, I know what he is after." Other groups you listen to and you say, "they're pretty good" and then you hear another record and then you can see where they leave off at one point and pick up at another.

I think the Stones have had a lot of good records and I think the good records have come out basically different. Like I said, I don't know the history of the group so I don't know if this is because musicians have changed. This last tune didn't really give me the group, let's put it that way. If you play another track, something that injected the complete group, then I would have dug it because this goes back to what Al said, you know, he digs Solomon Burke doing the tune and I do, too. Not that I don't dig anybody else's rendition of it and not that theirs is bad, but it makes me relate to Solomon Burke when I hear that song.

Jann: Before I put on something more recent by the Stones, let me ask this: I've heard rumors several times that Otis wrote "Satisfaction." Have you heard that?

Al: He wrote his version. Actually, Otis didn't know the tune.

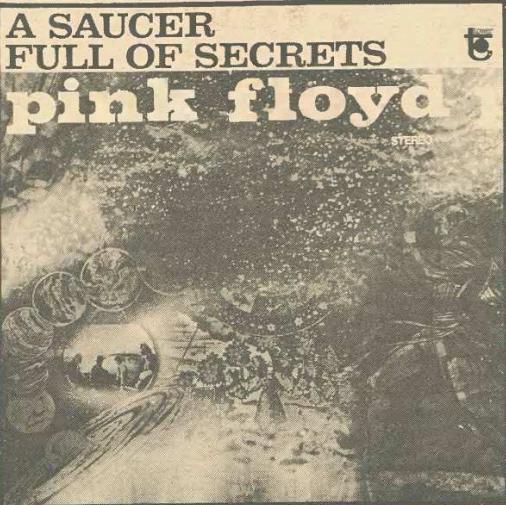
Steve: We didn't know the tune. We heard the record and if you ever listened to the record you can hardly understand the lyrics, right? I set down to a record player and copied down what I thought the lyrics were and I handed Otis a piece of paper and before we got through with the cut, he threw the paper on the floor and that was it, you know. As far as the story that Otis originally wrote "Satisfaction," it's completely false because we took the Rolling Stones record and then cut our version of what we thought we heard.

Al: We had a five-minute listen.

Steve: It's so different, people said well, he really wrote the song first. I can understand why people would get involved and say he must have written it because the Stones version is so different from Otis's version. Not putting one in front of the other, but that was our rendition of whatever the song was.

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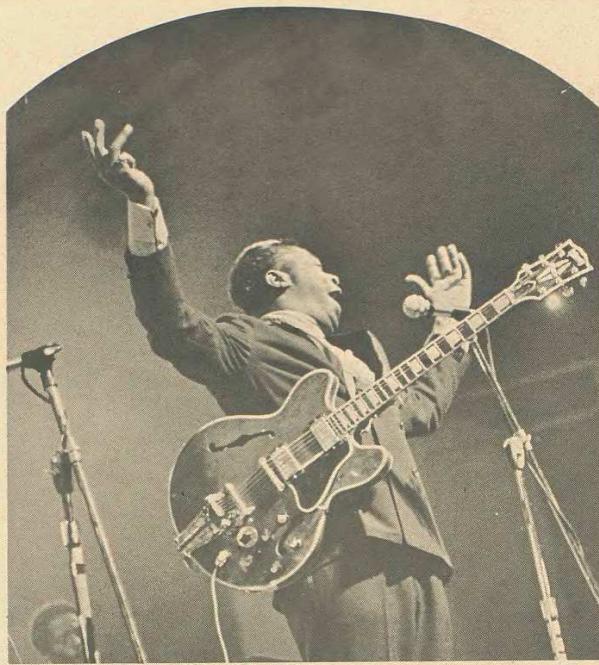
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BY JON LANDAU

## NEWPORT

The 1968 Newport Folk Festival was an incongruity at best. With interest in traditional forms of folk music apparently at a low ebb, the Festival was torn between the presentation of big names who brought out the crowds, and traditional artists who, for the most part, generated little attention or enthusiasm.

The Festival needs the big names to attract the kind of attendance it needs to support itself financially. However, the price it pays for presenting Joan Baez, Big Brother and the Holding Company and Arlo Guthrie on the same program with Fred McDowell, Ken Threadgill and Libba Cotton is that the audience comes to see the stars and cares little about the actual "folk."

The best evidence of the problem that this situation created could be seen at Saturday afternoon's workshops. The brochures advertising the workshops had announced that no vocal or instrumental amplification was going to be used this year. The idea was to make the programs relatively intimate. However, it is virtually impossible to have intimate programs with an audience of eight to nine thousand people, as was the case Saturday afternoon.

Instead, the majority of those present congregated around the main stage at Festival Field for the blues program which was scheduled to include the big names. I was there at the beginning of that program and Buddy Guy, a festival favorite, was first to play. Naturally, he required both vocal and instrumental amplification. At first an effort was made to keep the vocal amplification down so that it didn't carry all over the field where it would disturb the twenty other programs in progress. But the thousands up near the front—including myself—screamed for them to turn it up so that Guy and then Junior Wells could get into their music. And the volume was increased.

Touring the field after Guy was done, I realized that turning up the main PA system had virtually destroyed every other program taking place. Way in the back of the field one could actually hear Ralph Stanley and the Clinch Mountain Boys doing some beautiful bluegrass for an audience of maybe twenty people. In another corner, the Charles River Valley Boys seemed to be trying to fit their songs in during the breaks up on the main stage. It was sad to see Elizabeth Cotton sitting with a group of not more than fifteen people trying to play "Freight Train" over a jug band group that had followed Buddy Guy on the main stage. After a while most of the genuine workshops folded. The audience had come for a show and most people

weren't interested in the kind of intimate communication between artist and spectator which workshops are capable of providing.

Of course, this situation was an obvious consequence of the Festival's generally confused programming. No sympathetic environment for real folk artists could be created in an atmosphere so lacking in direction. For example, while Roy Acuff could not possibly be made to feel he is playing for an audience just like the one back home in Nashville, he ought to at least feel that there is an interest in learning about his music. I don't know how what Roy Acuff felt about the polite but generally unenthusiastic response he got, but I felt that most of the people were just waiting for the stars. I didn't happen to like his performance but I felt the Festival was better for having him and I wished there was some way in which a more effective context for him could have been established, instead of having him precede Theodore Bikel and Big Brother and the Holding Company.

But to get to the main events: Friday and Saturday nights' concerts offered almost all of the featured artists of the Festival. Friday night's program was disappointing by any standard. The program's first half was devoted to the Onward Brass Band, various freedom singers from the South, the Pennywhistlers and Arlo Guthrie. The second half was comprised entirely of Joan Baez and the Bread and Puppet Theatre. Of the actual attempts at folk music, the Pennywhistlers' offerings were among the most attractive. I am no authority on the subject, but it seemed to me that their full rich vocal sound was often enthralling, and, also, believable. Elizabeth Cotton, on the other hand, was simply out of place. Not because she isn't good enough to perform at a folk festival, but because a massive field and an audience of nearly ten thousand people is not the appropriate setting to listen to her pick "Freight Train." Unfortunately, I missed the Onward Brass Band, who had opened the program and who, in the brief spot I was able to catch, were quite exciting. They are a semi-Dixieland band with Creole overtones, and are genuine in every sense of the word.

Arlo Guthrie finished off the first half of the program to an enthusiastic response. Rather than do "Alice," he performed a new one-song monologue built around a children's song his father had written. The routine hit me as being pretty thin and Arlo seemed to be straining for both cuteness and laughs. Bill Cosby has definitely influenced his delivery, if not his material, and there was a studied or mannered quality to his diction which I found quite distracting. Personally, I wish



PHOTOS BY LEE TANNER

## THE NEWPORT

he would sing more and talk less. He sings folk songs beautifully.

After intermission we were favored with Joan Baez Harris. I happen to be one of those who is captivated by Miss Baez's voice. My admiration for her notwithstanding, her performance here was garishly tasteless. She began with a competent version of a Gil Turner protest song called "Carry It On." After that, it was pathetic. She did a flamenco-sounding Spanish song in which she accompanied herself on guitar in a style reminiscent of Peter, Paul and Mary and sounded every bit as authentic as Jose Feliciano.

Joan's unaccompanied "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" managed to combine the phoniest affectation of a Southern accent I've ever heard with irrelevant bursts of near operatic virtuosity. And she topped it all off with a version of "Suzanne" during which her guitar was obviously out of tune. Beyond that, she didn't take the time to learn either the words or the chords well enough to prevent her from muffing both at least once. Her only salvation was a pair of duets with her sister Mimi. Mimi's modesty and the demands of duet singing forced Joan into a brief

period of self-restraint. The results were the two best songs of the evening.

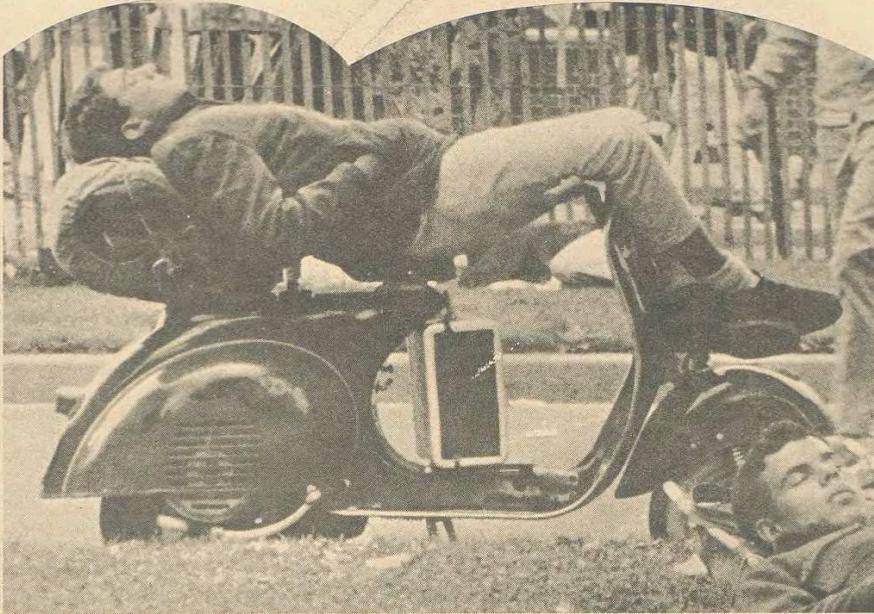
It is hard to tell whether such a performance is the product of indifference or lack of sensitivity or both. Whatever its causes, it is necessary to state that singing a country song with a southern accent doesn't make one a country singer and saying "Amen" after a gospel number doesn't make one the new Marion Williams. Style-hopping is unbecoming to a performer not equipped to do justice to the diverse traditions present in folk music. As a politician Joan Baez may get my vote, but as a musician I fault her for the same thing she is so quick to fault others: she doesn't seem to care.

Saturday evening's program was a vast improvement over Friday's. It was top heavy with the major names of the Festival. George Hamilton IV started things off with his country versions of contemporary folk-songs. He performed with a bassist and an excellent Nashville guitarist who gave Hamilton a distinctly country sound. Hamilton himself was thin and somewhat boring over his six-song stretch.

Ralph Stanley and the Clinch Mountain Boys came on after Ham-



MURRAY LERNER



## FOLK FESTIVAL

ilton and they too did country music, but they were surely no bore. Stanley has been recording straight bluegrass for twenty-five years (for the last ten on the King label). Although he is a first rate banjo picker, his group is probably most appreciated for their vocal work. The Stanley Brothers gospel records rank with Bill Monroe's as the best country gospel available.

Stanley seemed somewhat ill at ease and treated his audience with the kind of excessive deference characteristic of all the southern performers at the Festival. Nonetheless, his performances of "How Mountain Girls Can Love," "Man of Constant Sorrow," "The Hills of Roane County" and "Sally Goodin" made me nostalgic for the days when I was a bluegrass fanatic. Stanley has what Ralph Rinzler calls the "high lonesome sound." He sings country music with a depth and style more commonly found in blues, and the type of feeling he created in me was not unlike what I feel about the music of B. B. King. When Ralph Stanley sang I could hear someone's whole life singing for me. Hearing him at Newport was a pleasure.

B. B. King finished off the first half of the program. A sold out

Festival Field (17,000) was not the ideal setting for his intimate kind of blues but he made do. I think B. B. King is the greatest blues singer I have ever heard and probably the greatest guitarist as well. He made Buddy Guy and Junior Wells' afternoon performance look mighty tame by comparison. But because he was not fully at home with the performing situation he hammed it up a bit too much. Being theatrical is King's way of testing an audience. If you can show him you know the blues he'll work his ass off and play from his guts. If you just come for a show, that's what you'll get. And the show was fine. Still, it was nice to see him break loose towards the end and put down a mean, mean, "Sweet Sixteen." To really dig B. B. King you can't sit on your chair and watch. You have to be able to move your body, and do what you want to do. And that was impossible within the concert setting at Newport.

The second half of Saturday's program was a battle of nerves. It is safe to say that at least half of the audience had to come to this concert as if it were to be a Big Brother concert with supporting acts. Such people were forced to wait through numerous folk acts with dwindling

patience. While there were no disturbances there was some tension.

Among the better things preceding Big Brother were a group Jim Kweskin's Jug Band had found in Texas on one of their cross country tours. Ken Threadgill and his Hootenany Hoots were made up of Threadgill, relatives, and friends. They consisted of three amplified guitars and Threadgill's singing.

Their performance included four songs, all in the 1920's country style of Jimmie Rodgers. Threadgill, who must have been in his late fifties, told how in 1928 he had been working as an usher in a theatre in Austin, Texas, where he still lives. There he saw Rodgers and from that moment on he had been "baptized." He freely admitted to being obsessed with the music of the greatest white country blues singer of them all. He did three Rodgers songs with absolute fidelity to the style. It was a modest but moving performance and when he finished singing I felt that he had reached me with something I hadn't really experienced before. Threadgill's life was the more understandable for his having sung at the Festival. If anyone cared to understand it.

Roy Acuff tried unsuccessfully to give the audience a taste of the Grand Ole Opry. He was too corny for most people's taste and I didn't think he sang very well. He introduced his dobro player as "a boy who has been playing with me for thirty years."

When Acuff was finished it was near midnight and people were restless for the stars. But wait. A guest performer too big to be ignored wanted to perform. Theodore Bikel proceeded to do five or six songs to an increasingly tense audience. This last minute addition seemed to be noticeably out of place and a serious lapse in programming.

At last, Big Brother. They were unquestionably the hit of the festival. All the repressed quality of a folk concert where one sits and passively listens gave way to the spontaneity and excitement of rock and roll, as the stage was being set for their performance. People were now free to move their bodies and one could see in an instant why folk music could never have remained the music of the young. It isn't physical enough.

Having said that, let me say that from my point of view, Big Brother was not very good. The group is apparently trying to find a way of translating blues and soul over to a straight electric guitar context and, as a secondary concern, trying to mix blues and soul with various eclectic bits and pieces from other musical styles. Whether the resulting sound jells into a style with depth is subject to dispute. I don't think so.

The group started off with what

I expect will be their first single: "Piece of My Heart." The song was written by the late Burt Burns with Jerry Ragovoy and recorded on Shout records by Aretha's older sister, Erma Franklin. Big Brother's arrangement is modeled fairly closely after the original and suffers by comparison. Instrumentally, their rhythm section doesn't do what it should. The guitar solo was strained, unmusical, and irrelevant.

And then there is Janis. Talent, yes. A fantastic voice, yes. A great singer, no. To me, her melodrama, overstatement, and coarseness are not virtues. They are signs of a lack of sophistication and a lack of security with her material. The need to overstate is almost always the product of fear of what would happen if one understated. The attitude seems to be that if you don't hit people over the head they might miss the point. Maybe so, but Janis is a little too obvious for my tastes.

Or, put it another way. Erma Franklin's version of this song has soul. Janis Joplin's has balls. Take your pick.

On "Summertime" Janis started off with some soulful, wistful singing but again did it into the ground by the end of the song. Instrumentally, the band proved itself to be truly lame; Mike Bloomfield was being charitable when he described them as such. Gurley and Andrew don't know a decent rock or blues chorus between them, judging from their performance here. And the rhythm section never happens. The whole band drags her at every turn.

The weakness of the band became supremely evident when other members of the group sang lead, the reasons for which evaded me entirely. The harmony was sometimes simply misarranged, as the huge Newport amplification system made plain. Still, Janis was able to salvage some of their version of "The Cuckoo" by singing excellent harmony with the lead guitar figure.

By the time they got to "Ball and Chain" it wasn't even interesting. Janis did the song as it is—a straight blues—while the band cluttered things up with lead guitar noises. What excitement she herself possesses had been spent. She had already used every gimmick of which she was capable and was simply repeating herself. It was a bore.

Of course, I should note the audience loved every minute of it and that I was singularly isolated in my reaction. "Ball and Chain" brought them a massive standing ovation. Janis' personality and act had predominated against any artistic flaws that were present in her performance and she and the audience just beamed at each other through her two encores.

Then they left. So did I.

## SPECIAL REPORT: THE FRENCH SCENE

BY ALAIN DISTER

*Mr. Dister is a correspondent for "Rock and Folk" Magazine, a monthly publication devoted to new ideas in contemporary music, edited and published in Paris. This is his report on what's going on there now.*

French popular music, once dominated by the bland balladry of the sentimental Mediterranean folk tradition, has been sounding like rock and roll for ten years. In fact, the American musical forms of jazz and blues have been revolutionizing French taste for almost half a century with their message of sensuality and rebellion. From Dixieland to the American-derived Beatles, a considerable quantity of American influence has been absorbed by *les teenagers* of France.

Jazz made its appearance in 1917 with the American military presence and became a fad in the Twenties with the popularity of the "Black Revue" and dances such as the Black Bottom. The fad extended to French composers, Darius Milhaud for one, who used jazz themes and rhythms in their works. Swing bands were popular in the Thirties and collectors and fans of pure Dixieland organized to bring jazz groups to France.

Critic Hugues Panassié's magazine "Jazz-Hot" became the unofficial organ of the "Hot-Club" of France, where the famous team of guitarist Django Reinhardt and violinist Stephane Grapelli performed regularly. It was only after the war, though, that jazz really exploded. Jazz was a symbol of liberation to young Parisians after the years of German occupation. Thanks to underground discothèques, such as those of Charles Delaunay and Maurice Gullaz, which functioned secretly during the war because of the Nazi ban on Negro music, a lot of young musicians had been initiated into the rhythms of New Orleans. Louis Armstrong, King Oliver and Jelly Roll Morton were the idols of a whole generation and "Revivalist" bands were born everywhere in the "caves" (basement clubs) of the Latin Quarter.

More modern jazz forms began to find favor with a certain area of the public, after their exposure in the national tours of Jazz at the Philharmonic. Certain American musicians remained in France, helping and encouraging fellow musicians who are just now making their debut. Kenny Clarke, Bud Powell and Lou Bennett were for a long time honored guests in Paris. Around them a musical form slowly grew up calling itself jazz but having a definitely European character. The most famous example is the Martial Solal Trio (Sola, piano; Guy Pedersen, bass; Daniel Humair, drums), which was for a long time the best French group, and whose fame spread well beyond our borders.

At first reserved for a public composed of students and intellectuals, French jazz now seems well on its way toward conquering other parts of the population. I have even heard Gerry Mulligan played at a local dance in the French countryside!

The Rock phenomenon broke out in a different manner. In 1957-58, while the radio was still broadcasting sweet little Italo-Greco-Hispano-Portuguese airs, some young people were gathering around the still rare jukeboxes which were stocked with American hits of the era: Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly and Fats Domino.

The film "Rock Around the Clock" introduced us to Bill Haley. Another film portrayed the attitudes of young people who felt abandoned and misunderstood — "Rebel Without a Cause," whose hero, James Dean, was for many years the idol of French teenagers. In that era, when young people were trying to break out of the narrow limits of family life, those influences had an irresistible attraction.

There was a club in Paris, le Golf-Drouot, where a group of friends gathered around the "music machine" which played the likes of Elvis Presley, Eddie Cochran and Gene Vincent. In this group were Jean-Philippe Smet, Claude Moine and Christian Blondiau. A year later, they had become Johnny Hallyday, Eddie Mitchell and Lucky Blonde. A series of lucky breaks, television shows, re-

cording sessions and efficient publicity campaigns made them the most valuable commercial properties in French popular music.

They were very young, made a lot of noise, and very badly turned off the older generation, which regarded them as juvenile delinquents. They became the idols of youth and were widely copied. Within three years hundreds of groups and individual vocalists were born, and, just as rapidly, died.

Their repertoire consisted essentially of successful American rock songs translated into French. The words were mediocre, or worse; only the sound and rhythm counted. They felt the need to conquer a new public as quickly as possible, and quick million-sellers became commonplace. A magazine and a radio program, "Salut Les Copains," forged

little resemblance to the original song. The distributors simply preferred these more profitable French versions.

In spite of this vast commercial morass effort, many authentic talents were uncovered. Despite an apparent incompatibility between the rock beat and the French language, at least two artists, because of their gift of showmanship and drive, survived the fickle changes of fashion.

Eddie Mitchell (the former Claude Moine), at first a rock star who led a group called *Les Chaussettes Noires* ("The Black Socks") in the style of Gene Vincent, recorded a version of "Bebop-A-Lu-La" which was one of the most successful records of the time. He now sings on his own. His repertoire has slowly evolved from pop to rhythm and blues. He now does only original material, and with

ways wish to appear hip to the latest thing that comes from the other side of the Atlantic.

American pop music continues to bring with it its train of social consequences. These, unfortunately, are for the most part of a commercial nature. The influence of the hippies in Paris has not meant much more than a new clothing style and a few words of slang.

Nevertheless, an important phenomenon must be noted. For about two years now, a growing number of people have become interested in a different form of music and rhythm, an interest which goes beyond questions of fashion and momentary success. These listeners pay more attention to the quality of the songs offered them, and the singers no longer interpret just any adaptation but work on their own style, their own originality. It is rhythm and blues which is turning on this hipper audience. Young artists like Herbert Leonard and Noel Deschamps have a talent which is capable of giving to French pop music a real meaning due to their feelings for American rhythm combined with the power of well-chosen French lyrics.

Other, more traditional, influences have marked French pop music at one time or another. In 1965, for example, was a great year for the folksong, thanks above all to Hugues Aufray. He had bummed through the United States and met many folksingers, among them Bob Dylan. His first original songs show American folk music influence. At the end of 1965, Aufray had considerable success with his translations of some of Dylan's songs, among them "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right," "Bob Dylan's One Hundred Fifteenth Dream" and "Girl From the North Country."

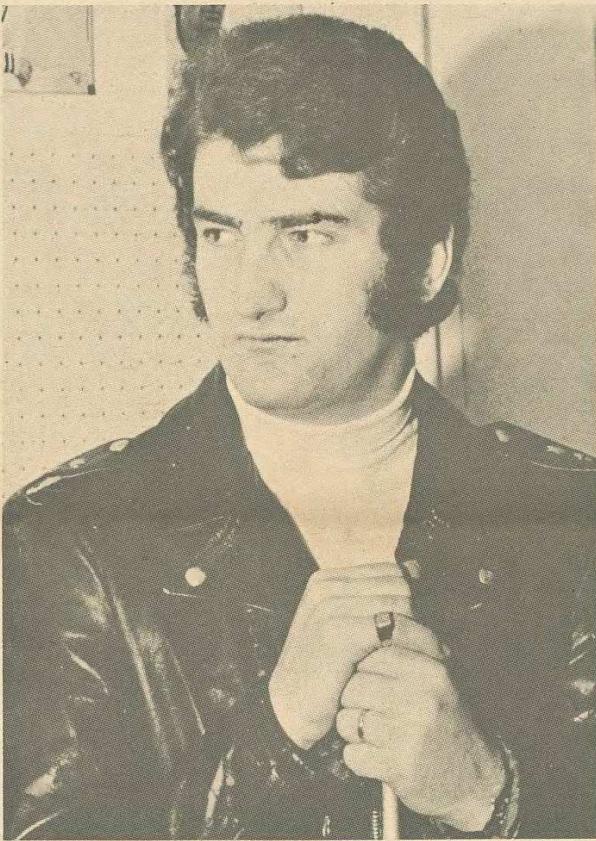
There are other French artists who adapt or translate American folksongs. Among them are *Les Troubadours* and *Les Sunlights*, who sing in the style of Peter, Paul and Mary; Graeme Allwright, a New Zealander by birth, whose songs follow the style of Pete Seeger; and Lionel Rocheman, who is seeking to popularize the hootenanny on Parisian soil.

Beyond these rather commercial popular figures, certain composers and authors, while taking inspiration from American rhythms, are writing music which is profoundly original and alive. Around 1956-58, Boris Vian, Henri Salvador and Danyel Gerard appeared as the precursors, at that time unknown to the public, of French rock music. Their interpretations were closer to parodies than adaptations.

Next came Claude Neugaro and Colette Magny, who were more directly influenced by jazz and blues. They can be regarded as two of France's best vocal interpreters for the originality of their lyrics as well as for the richness of their harmonies. Neugaro is accompanied by a jazz ensemble while Colette Magny is in the tradition of the great female blues vocalists, in particular Billy Holiday. By contrast with those who adapt, or rather plagiarize, American pop music, these all too rare examples really accentuate the profound work, the enormous influence, of American music on the French.



Johnny Hallyday



Eddie Mitchell

the myth of the "Idol-Copain." ("Copain" means pal or buddy; "idol" means idol.)

With all this an important social revolution developed. Teenagers now had their music, their radio programs, their magazines, their buying power (exploited by all the manufacturers of products involved in the above). More than a musical phenomenon, rock and roll became a social event.

American pop music was bringing much more than a new rhythm to France. It was accompanied by a life style which the youth of France tried to copy, sometimes quite unconsciously. Parisian rock and roll stars dressed themselves as cowboys, and were soon copied by thousands of young people. Rock and roll sold records, but it also moved Levi's, boots and shirts. At first these items were imported, and were very expensive; but soon they were manufactured on French soil. Today this production has become a prosperous industry which depends totally on pop music.

The principle of pop music's success was relatively simple. As soon as a rock song reached a high place on the Hit Parade, preferably in *Billboard*, the music publishers fought for the right to obtain it and give it the star who was certain to make it a hit. The result was sloppy adaptations, meaningless lyrics and

such ability that he was invited to Memphis in 1967 to the Stax studios, where he met Otis Redding, for whom he had boundless admiration.

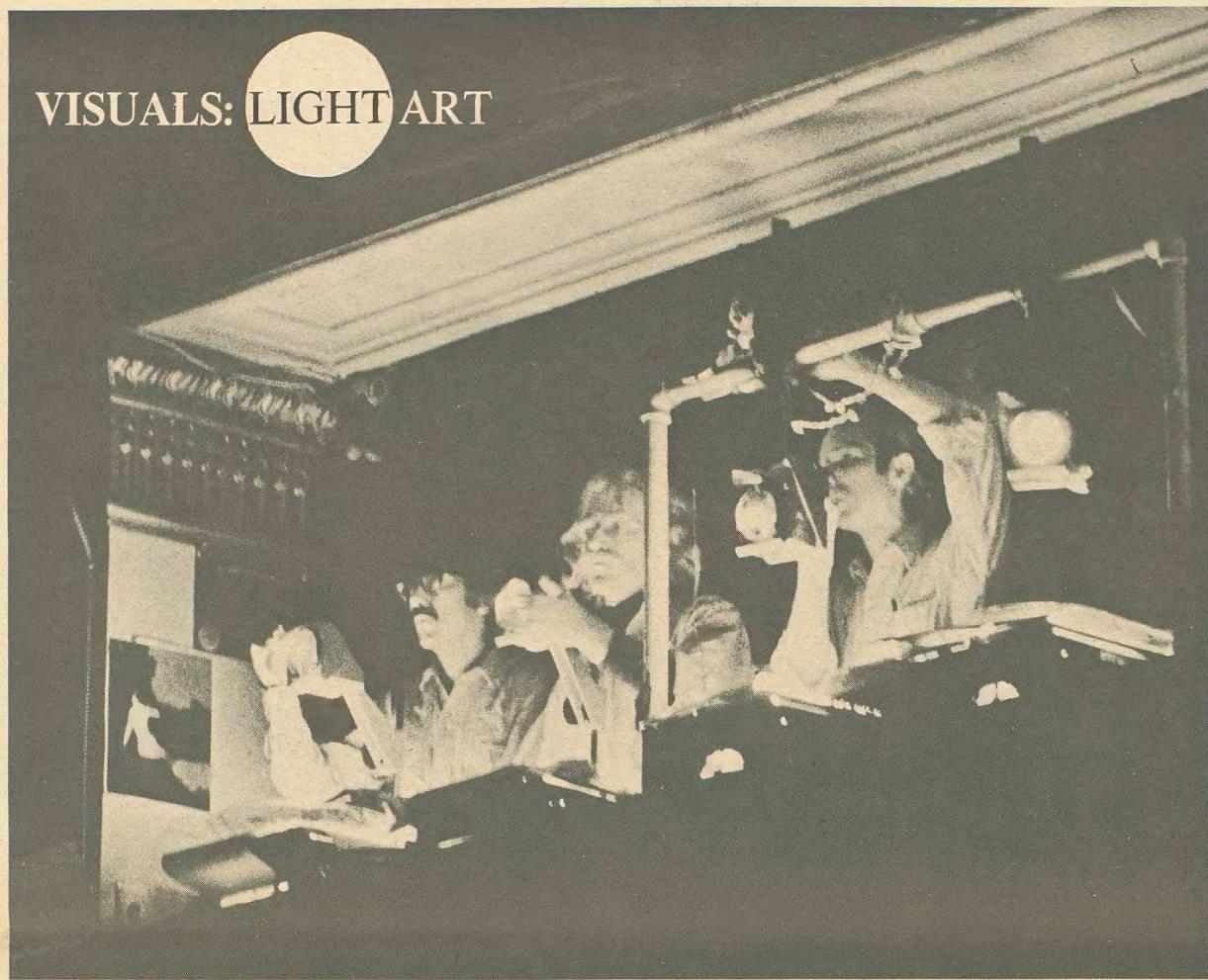
At the other end of the pop spectrum is the singer who himself symbolizes almost entirely the French contemporary music scene: Johnny Hallyday (the former Jean-Philippe Smet). He first came to fame at 17. At the age of 25, he is still Number One. He owes his success to three things: physical attractiveness, a strong voice, and above all, extraordinary stage presence. He is still the most fantastic showman in France.

All through his career, he has scarcely sung anything but adaptations, with a lot of talent and a good bit of opportunism. In 1960, he was Mr. Rock, Elvis Presley-James Dean style, with his leather jacket and Hell's Angels sexuality. In 1962, he was Mr. Twist. In 1963, he was France's most celebrated draftee. In 1965, he underwent a metamorphosis à la Beatles.

In 1966, he experienced crisis: failure, a nervous breakdown, an attempted suicide. In 1967 it was rhythm and blues, and finally, 1968 saw him singing "San Francisco" backed by a light show.

He has called himself successively "rocker," "beat" and "hippy." He represents his public perfectly. He is the image of French youth who al-

## VISUALS: LIGHT ART



BARON WOLMAN

BY THOMAS ALBRIGHT

For several months, I've been trying to piece together some comments on the topic of light art. I must have been waiting for something to show up that I could get genuinely excited about. This finally happened last month when I went to a theater production at the Straight Theater. It happened to be a new play, "Room Beyond the Closet and Other Voices in the Same Room," by John Fisher, but its extremely effective integration of light and sound called to mind other theatrical happenings scattered over the past year in which lights have been incorporated in an entirely new way, as an integral part of the total dramatic texture.

While the limitations of light art, at least in the sense of light shows spread over the walls of the big dance halls, are becoming increasingly obvious, its potential as an exciting new element in theater, dance and other forms of more "total" artistic experience are just beginning to be seriously explored.

It is doubtful if lights have ever been, or even can exist as an independent art form. Various people have been trying various things: Don Flavin's geometric construction of fluorescent tubes, Joseph Riccio's boxes of changing light and color, Steve Waldeck's lightning-like electronic "events." These are basically extensions of sculpture and painting, working with various properties of light but neglecting others, such as its existence as an energy force involving the dimension of time, or its ability to transform the remotest corners of an environment. Like a painting or sculpture, even though they are programmed with all kinds of changes, you look until you get tired of looking, with Riccio's "Kolectra" boxes probably taking honors for making you want to look the longest.

The big light shows, as they first grew up in the rock dance halls, were inseparable from the music, the dancing, the vibrations of the crowd, not to mention one's own particular state of consciousness before enter-

ing the auditorium. They were, in a sense, an extension of the art of scenic stage design, projecting it onto an environmental scale which involved everybody as actors in an event that obliterated the line between theater and reality. One might say the same was even true of the sound; whatever musical qualities distinguished one group from another, or came across clearly over recordings and FM, the emphasis was on the sound as sound, amplified into a physical, absorbing presence.

This was back in the days when everybody danced, or did Some Thing. Now, with everyone sitting around on the floor, the lights become more independent, more of a spectator art, but in doing so, they also lose much of the old impact; they are a little like mobile murals, a kinetic scenic backdrop around a stage where nothing is happening. This sometimes even becomes true of the sound, which resembles a musical overture for an event that doesn't follow.

The logical extension of light and sound as spectator events is the Light Sound Dimension which follows the basic concept of Cinerama, if not mere cinema. Using rear projection to flood a wide screen with essentially liquid images, and large speakers to project highly amplified jazz-electronic improvisations, the L.S.D. is an intensely dedicated, highly gifted group of light artists and musicians who carry abstract light-sound art to perhaps its ultimate in purity and concentration. But it does not really involve the viewer in an environmental way, and for all the flashes of beauty in its use of visuals and sound, it has not fully solved the problem of structure extended in time, or, in more traditional terms, plot.

If it is true that light art, in its most absorbing terms, has essentially been a new form of stage design, its increasing use in theater means that playwrights and directors are at last becoming aware of a natural, but revolutionary, device. The light-show

artists who have pioneered new techniques, created new forms and invented entire new machines for projecting and controlling light, have come up with the best solution yet to the old Brechtian problem of involving the theater audience in an environmental, total experience, of wrenching it by its emotional and psychological balls.

At the same time, its impact on theater may well be as shattering as that of the motion picture and television. To the degree that the camera must be considered on an equal level with the dramatic protagonists by any screen-writer or director concerned with TV or movie production, he will now also have to think in terms of lights.

The most striking use of lights in the performing arts so far has involved strobes. The most effective integration of lights with everything else that I can recall was an event put on last summer at the U.F.O. gallery on Haight street. The second time you sat through (or more precisely, inside) the program, it began to fall apart into a sum of its techniques, but the first time was a truly shattering experience; it was particularly effective in its combination of flickering overhead lights with crackling sound and of rapid-fire strobes on dancers who circled around the audience seated in the center of the room; the effect was like an apparition of frozen, flying statuary.

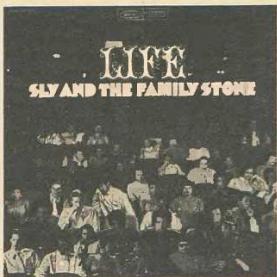
Strobes were used in a similar manner in John Alitto's play, "High Mass," creating an electronic finale that almost made you overlook how weak the script was. This, like the overemphasis on purely visual effects in many underground films, can be one of the big bugaboos of lights in theater: a play for example. A review in "Variety" of a recent Straight Theater production by Monty Pike concluded that while Pike's direction of lights, live rock and other forces had the impact of arousing some 50 spectators to take off all their clothes and start dancing, this might not have happened if the play itself had been more in-

teresting. On the other hand, John Fisher's play used strobes in a brief, but highly effective, scene of nightmarish expressionism integrated into a script that had some weaknesses, but was equally rich in meaningful, audience-involving content.

The use of lights in the performing arts has by no means been confined to "underground" productions. Various combinations of strobes and projections have been used with great effect in recent performances by the San Francisco and the Robert Joffrey ballets, the latter including multiple-projection "instant replays" of its own choreography. A strobe turned into the audience created the most electrically theatrical scene in the San Francisco Opera company's production last winter of Gunther Schuller's "The Visitation," which was probably better theater than opera. Lights and projections were being used in the opera house before the Fillmore auditorium, but they took on a more sweeping dimension than ever before in last season's "Das Rheingold," making it the best operatic production of the year.

This appropriation of "psychedelic" light techniques by "establishment" performing groups has been a highly honest matter, not like the ten minutes of psychedelic light effects that has come at the end of every Hollywood B-movie about hipies. The pioneers of light art, and the incredible success they achieved in audience involvement, have been in the forefront of forces which have made everybody begin looking at things in more directly visual terms; dance is no longer primarily an extension of music, theater no longer merely an extension of literature. Innovations in lights—and also in amplified, environmental sound—can infinitely extend the range of possibilities available to more traditional, "spectator" performing arts. On the other hand, playwrights, directors and choreographers can make sure that when the stage is set by light and sound, something is going to be happening on it.

## RECORDS



*Life*, Sly & The Family Stone  
(Epic BN 26397)

The most adventurous soul music of 1968 is being put out by two groups who really aren't part of the mainstream R&B scene at all. Both the Chambers Brothers and Sly and the Family Stone are primarily black, but both have white members. And both spend more time on the white rock circuit than in the black clubs and theaters.

The Family Stone emerges as the real revolutionary force on this, its third album. Sly's people have made a mighty progression since their first album just eight months ago. That album (*A Whole New Thing*) was a rather conventional program enlivened by two or three heavy flashes. *Life* is a flash from beginning to end. Easly the most radical soul album ever issued, it is an exhilarating success in a time of disappointments.

Soul music, like blues, was born in an environment of noisy clubs and parties. R&B records are made for instant pleasure, not concentrated listening, and they have always thrived on simplicity. A single sonic texture usually suffices for a song, sometimes for a whole album. But not with Sly and the Family Stone. Rarely does Sly let any element sink

in before he socks you with a change. The group has several capable lead singers in various voice ranges from bass to soprano, and they are forever trading off; some of the vocal arrangements almost sound like Lambert, Hendricks & Ross revisited. Same deal with the instruments—guitar, organ, bass, drums, horns appear in new combinations and voicings about every other bar. Like the Mothers, this group revels in the element of surprise. The contrast with the predictable fare you get on R&B stations is incredible.

Take for example the first cut, "Dynamite!" Opening with an unaccompanied blues guitar lick, turned up all the way, it goes into a heavy riff. With fuzz guitar out front, it's more a San Francisco riff than a Motown one. Then comes the vocal. The melodic line and progressions are fairly standard soul, but the words move into a new realm. Even more radical is the way the vocal lead is split up between at least three different singers. Each new one is a flash, yet the continuity never gets lost. Next flash: the word "Dynamite" is repeated, three times, to the accompaniment of a building drum roll that amply suggests the impact of an explosion. Back to the top, and the verse is repeated in a slightly longer form, with heavier instrumentation. (Relatively standard soul procedure here.) The "Dynamite" climax is doubly strong. Then the opening blues guitar once again, but here it dissolves into some of the "bomp-bomp" vocalizing that has always been a Sly trademark, and we are suddenly in the presence of a very well-executed Beatle-style fade. Suddenly we think we hear one of the horns doing the familiar lick from "Dance to the Music." Only after that are our suspicions confirmed, as someone actually sings the title line of that memorable song. More quotes from "Dance" and the music dissolves into happy talk and laughter. The whole sequence, the whole track, is ecstatic listening in any situation.

So that's one cut, time 2:43. All the cuts on this album are single-

length (range 2:12 to 3:28), but each one goes through flashes equal to those on "Dynamite!" Some of the flashes are cute—as on "Chicken" where voices dissolve into clucking, and on "Harmony" where the voices go into a fancy jazz chord everytime the title comes up. (I'll let the rest of these be surprises—the good taste and naturalness holds throughout.) Other flashes are musically very strong, like the double-time jazz turnaround figure on "Into My Own Thing," and the Staple Singers counterpart on "Chicken."

Still another flash technique is the use of quotes. "Dance to the Music," not itself on this album, becomes a sort of *leitmotif*, a wonderful device to tie the album together and emphasize the group's identity. It crops up in various guises on several different cuts. One whole cut, "Love City," is generated from the tune of "Dance"; note how the soprano sax line is a very interesting development from the one in "Dance." This may seem like self-plagiarism or lack of originality. I rather thank it's intentional. In any case, it's highly effective, just one more of the innumerable subtle things Sly thinks up to keep you glued to your stereo. "Eleanor Rigby" also comes in for a couple of masterful quotes.

Sly's words are still another radical factor. R&B lyrics have generally had more sociological than intrinsic interest; Sly's have plenty of both. He often deals with standard subjects, but his pithy, cliché-free language is quite a departure from the norm. Then again, Sly gets into some message and story things that are much closer to new rock than to soul, as in "Plastic Jim." "Jane Is A Grouper" is the most incisive song ever written about rock's camp-followers, not excluding Frank Zappa's several comments on this theme. "I'm an Animal" is perhaps the best of all—and I'd quote it, except that those words really have to be heard to be enjoyed. Some rather sensual sounds which I could only write as "ugh ugh" are an integral part of the message. The music, the words and the meaning are all one great

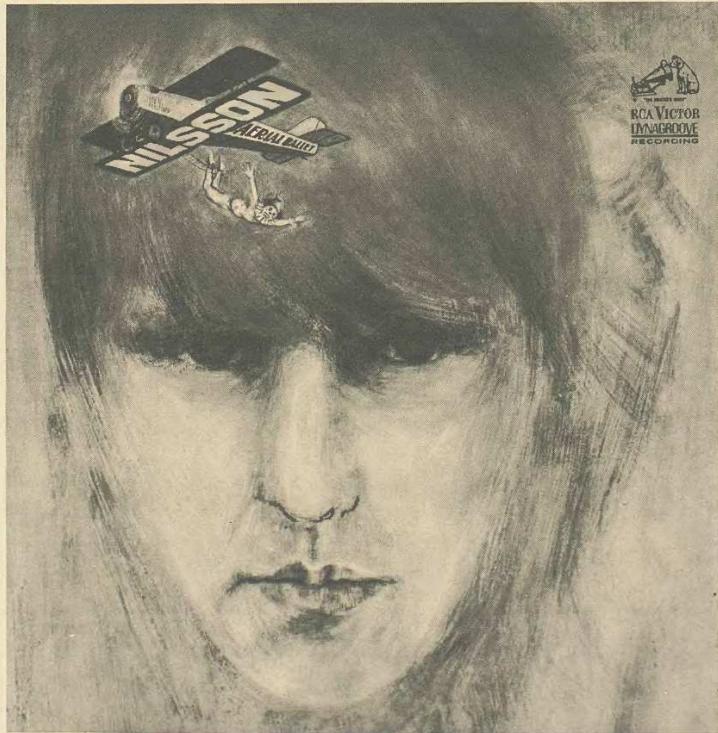
experience.

In a very curious way, this album reminds one of the big swing bands of the 1930's in their prime. It's because everything depends on the arrangements, and the arrangements are constructed to spotlight many different solo elements, each very briefly, with the interest heightened by a constantly changing background. The frequent use of riffs is another thing Sly has in common with old Count Basie records. Early rock and roll, with its absolute simplicity to the point of intentional monotony, was a great rebellion against this very approach. Now here we are with Sly and the Family Stone. Such things make rock history interesting. Soul music up to this point has continued to pursue the simplicity approach, its year-to-year progress coming mainly out of the advancement of vocal techniques, electric bass and drum playing, and improved recording quality. Sly's vocalists and instrumentalists are all more than competent, but they are content to serve their purpose within the arrangements, which are the *thing* here.

Sly and the Family Stone are opening the door to a whole new era in soul music. With their emphasis on flash, on never-let-up entertainment of the senses rather than on the orderly telling of a story, they might well be the first McLuhanian soul group. But perhaps they haven't got the door all the way open yet; there are still a few bugs in the machine.

The biggest bug is a real paradox, not at all easy to describe but evident nonetheless. Despite the uniform quality of all the cuts, and despite all the variety of texture and all the flashes, *Life* is not the best album to hear all the way through at one sitting. This is partly because certain changes pop up in similar form in many cuts, the trade-off vocal parts especially. But a much more important reason is that there is very little variety in the tempos—fast straight time all the way. There is even less variety in the dynamics, which are of course loud all the way

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"I'm an Animal" has a fleeting few bars that are gently scored, with some really sensual soft singing. They are incredibly beautiful in this context, and I'm sure Sly could do a lot more with dynamic variation if he cared to. A change into shuffle or 3/4 time could also have been very effective.

This album contains of course the group's current single "Life." Despite a fine flash in which a 1900 brass band becomes a soul horn section, and some brilliant effects on organ, it's not quite the best cut. This itself signifies a welcome change from all those R&B albums that sink or swim with their hit singles.

The recording is superb technically. Incredibly enough, this group performs this material on stage in very much the form it appears here. But the record is really a greater experience, because the flashes and subtleties are much clearer and more dramatic in stereo. The only complaint one might have is that one can't hear the bottom very well. But I suspect it was intended that way; it's just one more element to set *Life* apart from ordinary soul albums. Also it helps the clarity. The drums, recorded up front and very percussive, preserve the motion unfailingly.

—BARRON HANSEN



*Friends*, the Beach Boys (Capitol ST 2895)

The Beach Boys have tried faithfully to render who and what they are. That what they are is in some

ways a simply (existential but) foolish denial of reality, that Hawthorne is not the world that Watts is, is nothing other than the fact that art, like human action, when it impersonally duplicates reality, is mere schizophrenia.

The group takes risks, however. After *Pet Sounds*, the only flaw of which was its indulgence in a sometimes over-lush sound, they cleaned up and came out with *Smiley Smile*, so controlled, precise and tight that it risked (and at times lost) to sterility. "Wild Honey" bet on keeping tight and somehow simultaneously releasing everything they had in a sustained emotional burst. The bet paid off. *Friends* is a transition (note the jacket, the front of which is, like *Smiley Smile*, Rousseau-like, and the back a photograph of sunset at the beach). Occasionally lapsing into the style of *Pet Sounds* (as on "Diamond Head," which is not as good as anything on that earlier LP), they more often mix the dry, silly-but-witty (like a fatigued high) style of *Smiley Smile* with the harder-driving, less stiff, more emotional feel of *Wild Honey*.

The best cuts are "Meant For You," the dedication; "Friends," a more mature (in that it lacks their usual immediacy) evocation of the surfer "pack" or "club" vision—why go out with a girl when you can go cruising with the guys on Saturday nights? It's really warm, simple, touching, saying in not so many words that friendship isn't about words. Other groups say what is happening, they talk about what has happened and what should have, and, by implication, why what has has and why what should have hasn't.

Everything on the first side is great. These cuts, "Wake the World," "Be Here In the Morning," and "When a Man Needs A Woman" all evoke the elation of "Wild Honey." (The lyrics on the last are a weird synthesis of r-and-b rauchiness and the group's own wholesome naivete.) "Passing By," reminiscent of "Flying," is the best instrumental they've done, a smooth linear construction.

On the second side, "Anna Lee" is a trite melody, and "Diamond Head," except for a break in the middle, is uninteresting. But two cuts by Dennis Wilson and Steve Kalinich, "Little Bird" and "Be Still," are tight, emotional and beautifully done, with fine lyrics that do not exploit the California-nature-youth idiom that is, as vision, as artistic as the music itself. "Transcendental Meditation" is unfortunate, because India Imports Gibranism is unfortunate, and because it experiments questionably with jazz. But for pop mysticism, it's not as pretentious as it might be.

"Busy Doing Nothing" words and music by Brian, is a great lyric, a matter-of-fact, vernacular exposition that well evokes a quiet mood with its small beauties. A good melody tapers off into embarrassingly sloppy jazz at its very end.

Like any entity that creates its own idiom, musically as well as culturally, the Beach Boys take getting into. Listen once and you might think this album is nowhere. But it's really just at a very special place, and after a half-dozen listenings, you can be there.

—ARTHUR SCHMIDT



West (Epic BN 26380)

West demonstrates a strong emphasis on clear vocals, tight arrangements and a preference for a relaxed, unified delivery. The result is a very pleasing album of folk, country, and pop ballads. While the collection as a whole is rather tame, it is professional and listenable.

Working with a nucleus of four members—adding two more when brass is included—West combines a good deal of country and western picking with varying amounts of folk material. Several arrangements come close to being too slick but are saved from commercialism by the absence of studio gimmickry. Producer Bob Johnston refrained from overdubbing during the Nashville recording session, thus preserving a clean, natural sound.

The level of the group's musicianship is high, encompassing backgrounds in jazz, Dixieland, folk, country and rock. This interdisciplinary mold not only provides for interesting approaches to several songs, but underscores West's capability to evolve on its own without chasing a rigorously defined musical sound.

The album's lead cut—"Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues" (released as a single)—features a clear, rising vocal line which captures much of the Bob Dylan original. The other Dylan number—"Baby You Been On My Mind" (only three cuts are composed by the group)—has a freer feeling and benefits from a couple of well placed yee-hah western bridges.

West shows its versatility with "Step By Step," a solid rock composition by Stewart. Augmented by Jon Sagen on trumpet and Claire on piano, West cuts loose with a series of dominant sounds which resolve into a strong, melodic brass line reminiscent of "Do You Want to Swing On A Star." The group creates a nice tension and really swings in the process.

Bob Claire, the group's principal arranger, shows a great deal of sensitivity with "Dolphins"—a lilting ballad with an arresting feel of fantasy. Claire couples flute with guitar in a series of rising triplets to create a lush, underwater effect. The arrangement is tight and imaginative and beautifully complements the lyric imagery. These qualities are largely missing from "New England Winter" in which the instrumental work fails to complement the lead vocal. Here West lacks the ease and

finesse of "Dolphins," drowning out back up vocals and generally sounding sloppy. Conceivably a better balance in the studio could have rectified this shortcoming.

In the future, Claire can be expected to contribute a good deal to West's development, particularly regarding the integration of more brass. Prior to joining West he was a member of the Lee Schipper Quintet and was voted the most promising reed instrumentalist at last year's Intercollegiate Jazz Festival at Notre Dame.

Adding to these credentials Mike Stewart's proficiency as vocal coach, the group brings to its first recorded effort a maturity of musicianship which should have an important bearing on the future evolution of an already original sound. West can be expected to move rapidly in this direction.

—JOHN GRISSIM



*Last Time Around*, Buffalo Springfield, Atco SD 33-256

As a final testament to their multitalent, the Buffalo Springfield have released *Last Time Around*, the most beautiful record they've ever made.

This is the second record album by an originally Canadian group (the first was *Music From Big Pink* by The Band) of major importance to be released this month. They both have their country roots showing. The great difference lies in their separate "heaviness distinction." The Band are overwhelming seriousness and pointed profundity, and the Buffalo Springfield are happier sounding, more sweet-country flavored. They sound, as Jim Messina croons, like a "carefree country day."

"Four Days Gone" is one of the best tracks the Springfield has ever done. Stills's vocal is, as usual, uniquely trembly. It's a sad, C&W flavored song about a guy on the road running from the government, trying to get to his chick ("I'm four days gone into runnin'"), who can't tell his name because he's "got reason to live." The piano tinkles Crammerily in the background as Stills tells the story. "Government madness," he complains.

Stills has written five of the cuts on the album. "Special Care" and "Uno Mundo" show his amazing versatility as a songwriter. Both are entirely different from the C&W-ish "Four Days Gone." "Special Case" is a rock number in the finest sense. After a keyboard intro in the style of Dylan's "Black Crow Blues," it's led by a furious, screaming guitar and a crashing, closely following organ. Stills trembles the paranoid lyrics: "Hey there you on the corner/staring at me/Would you like to shoot me down?" The guitar's buzzing vibrato lays down the melody as he raves on in the background, yelling at the people. It sounds as if he's being dragged away.

"Uno Mundo" is a Latin-based maracas-congas-trumpet Jamaican ska-beat politi-calypso blast at the world: "Uno Mundo/Asia is screaming/Africa seething/America bleeding/just the same."

On "I Am A Child" Neil Young sounds more like Tim Hardin than Tim Hardin. It's not very often that this happens, that two performers sound almost identical. Oscar Peterson sounds so similar to Nat "King" Cole that for years, during Cole's career, Peterson did not sing. Then, when Nat died, Oscar put out a memorial album dedicated to him—he sang all of Nat's best loved songs—an almost perfect duplication of the King's original recordings. And the similarity was unintentional, as the likeness between Young and Hardin. Moreover, "Child" is done exactly in

—Continued on Next Page

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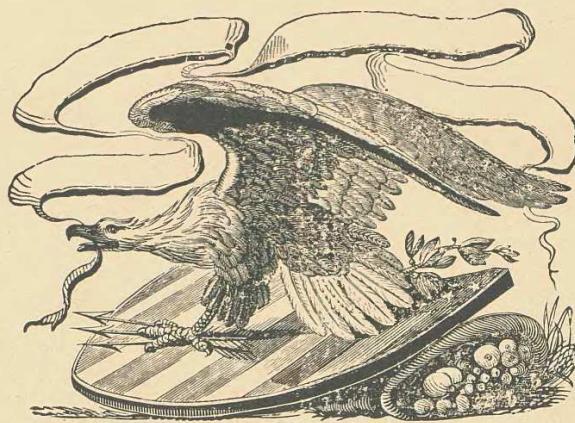
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*Our Editor took it home and left it laying there for people to see. He told us that everyone who came over — and you can imagine what kind of people these were — thought that it was beautiful. In fact, everyone asked if it was possible to purchase one somewhere.*

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## Records: No More Springfield

*Continued from Preceding Page*  
Hardin's electrified country-folk vein. It's a nice tune, very pretty, with some strikingly poignant lines: "You can't conceive of the pleasure in my smile." It's very simple and light. Even the harmonica bit reminds one of Herb Shriner playing "Back Home in Indiana."

Richie is a beautiful singer, and his best efforts here are the ballads "It's So Hard To Wait" and "Kind Woman." "Hard To Wait" is a plaintive love song: "I'll never forget you/I hope you care" — it moves slowly, backed by clarinet, acoustic guitar, drums and bass—all of which are played down appropriately, in order to highlight Richie's lingering

falsetto. "Kind Woman" is similar and is performed just as nicely.

But the best track on the album is "Carefree Country Day." Jimmy's crackly-voiced lead vocal ("I get up in the morning with a cock-a-doodle-doo/I get myself together if and when I choose") has the most relaxed country flavor this side of Jack Elliott. Some great backup harmony by Richie and Steve and a funky "wha-wha-wha" horn interlude complement Jimmy's vocal superbly. It even has a "dot-in-doo-wah-wap-en-doo-wat-en-dah" fadeout which is the finest bit of country doodling since Elliott's "Guabi Guabi."

Too bad this isn't the first time around.

—BARRY GIFFORD

## Howlin' Wolf: 'No Yodel'

*Continued from Page 6*  
just don't think they've done right by me."

So with the exception of his appearance on a recent *Super Blues Band* recording issued by Chess, the Wolf's recording days will be ended, unless he can be persuaded to continue, until he's convinced that there is an honest record company executive. And that'll be an extremely difficult thing to do.

He can be heard on six other albums, including Cadet's *Festival Of The Blues*, where he appears with

Buddy Guy's band. His songs have been recorded by a great number of performers, from "Killing Floor" by the Electric Flag, to Cream's version of "Sittin' On Top Of The World."

Howlin' Wolf remains a proud man. He's planning to retire soon as he doesn't like being on the road, separated from his family in Chicago. He's always taken care of himself. He's his own man.

"I'm not completely satisfied," he admits, "but I'm probably about as close right now as I'll ever be."

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